DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 258 464 FL 015 092

TITLE	Humanistic Approaches: An Empirical View. ELT Documents 113.
INSTITUTION	British Council, London (England). English Language and Literature Div.
REPORT NO	ISBN-0-08-030303-X
PUB DATE	82
NOTE	137p.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - General (020)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Education; Classroom Communication; *Classroom Techniques; Computer Assisted Instruction; Dramatics; Educational Philosophy; *English (Second Language); Group Dynamics; *Humanistic Education; Interviews; Questioning Techniques; Remedial Instruction; *Second Language Instruction; *Second Language Learning; Self Disclosure (Individuals); Self Esteem; Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS	Silent Way (Gattegno); Suggestopedia

ABSTRACT

A collection of papers on humanistic approaches to instruction in English as a second language includes: an introduction (Patrick Early); "Humanism" (Earl W. Stevick); "Some Humanistic Doubts about Humanistic Language Teaching" (Christopher Brumfit); "Self-Confidence Through Self-Disclosure: The Pursuit of Meaningful Communication" (Gertrude Moskowitz); "Exquisite Corpses, Men of Glass and Oulipo: Harnessing the Irrational to Language Learning" (Alan Maley); "Off Stage: Informal Drama in Language Learning" (Margaret Early, Carole Tarlington); "Awareness Activities for Teaching Structures" (Mario Rinvolucri); "A Humanistic Philosophy of Education" (Jennybelle Rardin); "Interviewing in the Group Life of Community Language Learning" (Paul G. La Forge); "CLL: A Way Forward?" (Rod Bolitho); "Learner-Centred Remedial Work: A Humanistic Approach" (Henry Daniels, Denny Packard); "Designer's Needs versus Learner's Needs: Conversation in the Classroom" (Patrick Early); "How Real Is a Computer Simulation?" (John Higgins); "Suggestopedy and the Adult Language Learner" (Peter O'Connell); and "The Silent Way: Evaluating an Experience" (Arthur McNeill). (MSE)

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0 08 030303 X
ISBN ~~0-901618-74-8~~

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CONTENTS

Page

Introduction 5
Patrick Early, The British Council, London

Humanism 7
Earl W Stevick, Foreign Service Institute, Arlington Va., USA

Some humanistic doubts about humanistic language teaching 11
Christopher Brumfit, University of London Institute of Education

Self-confidence through self-disclosure: the pursuit of meaningful communication 20
Gertrude Moskowitz, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pa., USA

Exquisite corpses, men of glass and Oulipo: harnessing the irrational to language learning 34
Alan Maley, The British Council, China

Off stage: informal drama in language learning 41
Margaret Early and Carole Tarlington, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Awareness activities for teaching structures 50
Mario Rinvolucri, Pilgrims, Canterbury

A humanistic philosophy of education 59
Jennybelle Rardin, Counseling-Learning Institutes, East Dubuque, Ill., USA

Interviewing in the group life of community language learning 68
Paul G La Forge, Nanzan Junior College, Nagoya, Japan

CLL: a way forward? 80
Rod Bolitho, South Devon Technical College, Torquay

Learner-centred remedial work: a humanistic approach 87
Henry Daniels, University of Lyon II, and Denny Packard, Ecole des Mines, Nancy, France

Designer's needs versus learner's needs: conversation in the classroom 92
Patrick Early, The British Council, London

How real is a computer simulation? 102
John Higgins, The British Council, London

Suggestopedy and the adult language learner 110
Peter O'Connell, formerly with the Institute of Suggestology, Sofia

The Silent Way: evaluating an experience 118
Arthur McNeill, The British Council, London

Notes on the contributors 124

Bibliography 127

INTRODUCTION

Patrick Early, The British Council, London

This number of *ELT documents* originated as a conception at the TESOL Convention in Detroit, in 1981. It seemed to me, and to some of my British colleagues who attended the Convention, that it was time to consider some of the wider implications of the humanistic approaches which have been much written about lately in the USA, and to do this specifically from another cultural perspective — the British view of ELT. It seemed to us that there was a promising basis for an Anglo-American dialogue, namely to pose the question of how far an essentially optimistic philosophy of education, one which emphasises individual and personal growth, can be applied to language teaching and learning in circumstances and settings remote from the USA, where the implicit assumptions upon which classroom transactions are based are quite different. Is a 'humanistic' approach to language teaching either new, or necessary? Perhaps the term, the meaning of which our initial contributors, Earl Stevick and Christopher Brumfit, have struggled to define, is quite simply meaningless? Just as in the underwear advertisement which suggests that 'we are all loveable underneath' perhaps 'humanistic' is something we can expect every teacher to be? Or is there more to it than that — a more potentially rewarding relationship between teachers and learners perhaps? A chance to make teaching more truly learner-centred?

The dialogue seems important not only because few British teachers are familiar with the humanistic methodologies in question (and so are scarcely in a position to evaluate them), but also because there seems at least a chance that an effective approach to evaluation of these methodologies may emerge from the meeting of British and American traditions of education. The strong British tradition of philosophical scepticism, allied to an empirical turn of mind, might, it seemed to us, have something to contribute to better understanding of the potential and limitations of these approaches. Now that the work of Earl Stevick, Jennybelle Rardin, Gertrude Moskowitz, Laforge and so many others is getting to be quite well-known in British ELT circles, it seemed an appropriate enough moment to attempt to take stock of what 'humanism' means, or could mean, to those of us who did not originate the term or the ideas.

This volume, then, is constructed around the idea of a many-sided conversation in which quite different philosophical attitudes and presuppositions are brought to bear on the topic, and in which everyone is trying very hard to make sense of what the others are saying. The dialogue is not all one-sided. There is a British 'humanism' as well as an American one, and it is perhaps called 'creativity' (see Maley, p. 34). Nor are advances in technology necessarily excluded from discussion based on 'humanistic' principles (see Higgins, p. 102). A Taoist approach to language teaching will allow many roads to a single end.

HUMANISM

Earl W Stevick, Foreign Service Institute, Arlington, Va., USA

I've never been comfortable with the word 'humanistic' as it has been used in our field of late, and that for two reasons. The first is a cognitive reason: I don't know what it means. Secondly, 'humanism' is a word which carries with it a great deal of emotion, at least for some people. So I have seldom if ever used it without inverted commas — a way of trying to insulate myself from it, I suppose.

Since the word 'humanism' is difficult for me to use directly, I ask myself what its antithesis might be. (The shield of Perseus!) The word is a conundrum, so I will describe its opposite with a caricature. A 'non-humanistic' course is one which is taught because tradition, or some authority distant from the classroom, has decreed it shall be taught — a course in which the students work mechanically from the rules and the vocabulary in a book, or repeat, again mechanically, a series of dialogues and drills, in order to produce correct sentences in a language which remains foreign from the start of the course to its end. This is a course in which the teacher is always and in every sense 'in charge'. There is no genuine communication, no uncertainty except about whether one can come up with the right answer, and no joy except in getting a good grade. I've said this is a caricature, but I've been both student and teacher in courses that were not very different from what I've described. Maybe you have too.

There seem to me to be at least three dimensions in which methods that label themselves (or are labelled by others) 'humanistic' depart from this caricature. Each of these methods is unlike the others according to the dimension or dimensions in which it departs must conspicuously, and of course also according to what it does in these dimensions. In this article, I shall attempt neither a categorisation nor even a catalogue of the methods; I shall address myself only to the dimensions.

The first dimension that occurs to me is attention to the **purposes** of the learner: what learners are interested in, what they expect to need the language for, what they expect to carry away at the end of the course other than pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. In this sense, 'humanism' emphasises the centrality of the learner rather than the supremacy of the subject matter or of the teacher.

The second dimension is the balance of **power** in the classroom: the degree of independence, autonomy, responsibility and creativity which are allowed to (or required of) the learner. In my caricature there is at any given time only one task for the learner, and only one most acceptable way of completing that task. In some 'humanistic' departures from the caricature, learners may respond to a task in numerous and equally acceptable ways, may select among tasks or among ways of interpreting tasks assigned by the teacher, may go so far as to participate in designing the tasks themselves. Even when it comes to decisions about grades, the learner may not be a helpless evaluand at the mercy of an almighty teacher.

Notice that these two dimensions are quite independent of each other: a method may allow great freedom, and hand over great power to learners within a subject matter which is related only in the most general way to their purposes. Another method may be exquisitely tailored to clearly stated goals of learners, yet keep them in lockstep at all times.

In a third dimension, methods differ in what they assume about the process of learning. Does gaining control of a foreign language depend on the same types of brain functioning as learning to tie one's shoelaces, or as learning to play the flute, or as learning to swim? Does it depend on a specific Language Acquisition Device, somewhere in the neurological equipment, which only humans have developed to any significant extent? What is the relationship between the verbal and the non-verbal parts of the learner's experience — between the words that come in and those perceptions which would be available also to a chimpanzee, a cat, or even a chicken? Does the idea of a Language Acquisition Device include this relationship?

On how many levels does education take place? Are we to concern ourselves only with our students' learning of language and its use, or should we also try to keep track of their learning about learning, their learning about learning about learning . . . their 'awareness of awareness'?

Within the third dimension we witness the perennial dispute between those who emphasise the parallels between gaining control of a language as an infant and gaining control of its as a post-adolescent, and those who are more impressed by the differences. 'Humanists' have come out on both sides of this issue. Of late, we have been considering the possibility that both processes (if indeed they are different) may go on side by side in a classroom populated by adolescents or adults. Those 'humanists' who try to make this happen differ among themselves as to how best to go about it.

Among the non-verbal components of experience, do emotions play a role which is qualitatively different from the role played, for example, by perceptions of shape, colour and motion? If they do — if they are in fact prior to and deeper than other sensations — then how may we best deal with them? Shall we actively seek them out? If we do, shall we verbalise them or otherwise focus the learners' attention on them? Or shall we assume that cheerful, well-organised, interesting teaching will take care of the emotional side of things, and that nobody but the teacher need think about it? Methodologists who have been labelled 'humanistic' here exhibit differences of opinion which are both wide and profound.

Given this diversity of opinion and practice with regard to the purposes of instruction, the distribution of power, and the nature of the learning process itself, we hardly need wonder at the cognitive haze which has surrounded the word 'humanism' in foreign language education. Similarly, the depth (and the warmth!) of contrasting commitments on the part of persons both within and outside the 'humanistic' fold account for much of the emotion that I have mentioned.

Enough then, I say, of 'humanism' in language teaching! But if I reject this concept as wearying and unprofitable I have the obligation (or at least the option) of coming up with a successor to it. My nominee is 'realism'. I choose this word for two reasons. Firstly, it says what I **really** want to say. At least as importantly, it is so trite and so bland that I am confident no-one will succeed in turning it into a buzzword or bandwagon.

What, then, are the tenets of **Stevick's New Realism**? They are, of course, exactly three in number:

Tenet 1: everything that the assorted 'humanists' have said is pretty much right, and worth paying attention to.

(The same is true, needless to say, of the findings of those researchers who have not worn the 'humanistic' badge.) It **does** make a difference if we build (or if we don't build) our courses in relation to the purposes of our students. There **are** many workable (as well as many unworkable) configurations of power in the classroom, and our choice among them **does** make a difference. The brain **does** work in ways past our present knowledge, there **are** important differences among individuals with regard to learning style, the emotional component of the language study experience **is** terribly important, and so on.

Tenet 2: all of the factors mentioned in Tenet 1 (as well as many others) interact.

Any method, 'humanistic' or not, is its own blend of these factors. There are many highly successful blends in the marketplace, some radically different from others. There are also at least a few unsuccessful blends, with most methods lying somewhere in between.

Tenet 3: our situation is therefore essentially hopeless.
It is, at least, if we are looking for clear answers about which techniques and which materials to use — and even if we are looking only for clear rules about how to choose among alternative techniques and materials and power distributions. The factors (Tenet 1) are just too numerous, and the blends (Tenet 2) are too subtle, their stability too dependent on conditions outside our control. None of us is able to deal at once with everything that will affect the outcome of our teaching — not even with all of those things that we at least partially understand. Yet we all know that some degree of success is possible. We also know that it is more likely when we follow what light we have. In this sense we are not, after all, in a hopeless situation. It's only that, to quote Martin Luther's non-humanistic dictum, we must continue to 'go forth and sin bravely!'

All three of these tenets are essential to the New Realism. Without the first, we would be back in the Old Realism. Without the second, we ought all to get together and raise a methodological Tower of Babel. Without the third, we will be blinded by local successes and by local failures.

SOME HUMANISTIC DOUBTS ABOUT HUMANISTIC LANGUAGE TEACHING

Christopher Brumfit, University of London Institute of Education

'Humanistic' is a good thing to be. The literature in both psychology and language teaching makes it clear that no sensible person should want to be anti-humanistic. Humanistic teachers do many things which pre-humanistic teachers considered desirable. Unlike their opponents, humanistic teachers see language as something which must engage the whole person, not as something purely intellectual; they recognise that their students are people like themselves, with emotional and spiritual needs as well as intellectual ones, people who can contribute to their own learning, who are not the passive recipients of someone else's teaching; humanistic teachers believe in a world of autonomous, creative and emotionally secure people, and they believe that education can assist the process of creating such a world.

Such claims, which can be gathered, explicitly and implicitly, from the works of Stevick,[1] Moskowitz,[2] Simon *et al*,[3] Gattegno,[4] Curran[5] and many others, are immediately attractive, but they are also very general. Throughout much discussion of humanistic teaching there is an implicit opponent, but it is difficult to work out who it is — for we are all on the side of virtue. In post-war western society it would be difficult to find many teachers who would not subscribe to the humanistic ideals. Argument is only likely to arise when we start discussing the most appropriate means of achieving these goals, and the role of the teacher in this process.

It is important to make this point right at the beginning, for there is a tendency in casual discussion of humanistic teaching to see the pursuit of virtuous goals as uniquely embedded in a given set of procedures. Statements of concern for the complexities of learners, which have been received with delight and appreciation in language teaching circles, are very often no more than contemporary rephrasings of basic axioms in traditional general teacher training. This is true to such a great extent that one wonders whether much humanistic discussion is simply a reflection of the fact that, unlike almost any other area of basic teaching, language teaching can be entered with little or no educational training. In some ways it is embarrassing to be a member of a profession in which so many people are so totally unaware of the basic approaches to learning, classrooms and learners that all primary school teachers are exposed to during their three years of training. One fact in particular needs to be emphasised: there can be no instant solutions, for human beings are so infinitely complex that teachers must be infinitely sensitive to their students' variabilities. And there is no method, and no book, which can be a substitute for the guidance of another experienced teacher and the experience of actually working a normal teaching life. Being a good teacher means enabling students to learn, and there are as many ways of doing that as there are teachers and students.

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[1] E W Stevick. *Memory, meaning and method: some psychological perspectives on language learning.* Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1976, and *Teaching languages: a way and ways. loc. cit.* 1980.

[2] G Moskowitz. *Caring and sharing in the foreign language class: a sourcebook on humanistic techniques.* Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1978.

[3] S B Simon, L W Howe and H Kirschenbaum. *Values clarification: a handbook of practical strategies for teachers and students.* New York: Hart, 1972.

[4] C Gattegno. *Teaching foreign languages in schools: the Silent Way.* New York: Educational Solutions, 1972.

[5] C A Curran. *Counseling-learning in second languages.* Apple River, Ill.: Apple River Press, 1976.

But this is only to attack the misuse of humanistic discussion. Books may offer us guidance from experienced teachers, and the best of the books in the humanistic tradition[6] have value precisely because they enable us to watch experienced teachers grappling with problems central to their professional life in the light of their own reading and discussions with other teachers. Even more dogmatic and tendentious books will provide us with stimulation by virtue of their very dogmatism. But there are more central issues which we should be wary of, and these do deserve more extended discussion.

Teaching and therapy

One aspect of humanistic teaching derives from a therapeutic tradition. This tradition is influential in a number of ways: directly, in Curran's work with counselling learning,[7] in Moskowitz's work,[8] through Stevick's interest in transactional analysis.[9] This tradition relates teaching to the work of Rogers[10] and to a movement in self-education which developed, particularly through encounter groups in the States, to have a momentum of its own independent of, and to some extent in opposition to, the conventional education system.

Several commentators[11] have described how humanistic psychology has emerged from a philosophical basis in existentialism, with its emphasis on alienation. In opposition to the expertise of the Freudian or Jungian expert figure, the therapist and the patient start from their equal need for shared experience in the present. The opposite of alienation is contact, which happens in the present. Explanation and understanding are products of the past, and depend on expertise, on diagnosis of cause and effect, but contact can be achieved through an immediate relationship with the therapist without the barrier created by expertise.

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[6] *eg* E W Stevick. *Opera cit.*

[7] C A Curran. *Op cit.*

[8] G Moskowitz. *Op cit.*

[9] E W Stevick. *Op cit.*, 1976.

[10] C Rogers. *Freedom to learn.* Columbus, Ohio: Merrill, 1969.

[11] *eg* J Korel. *A complete guide to therapy.* Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976.

This is of course a condensed summary of a complex position, and is therefore bound to be unfair. But it is possible to comment on some of the risks when a model such as this is applied to education. There are major difficulties with transferring ideas from medical to non-medical domains. Psychiatrists and doctors habitually see people who have defined themselves as so deviant as to require attention. Techniques which have been devised to cope with breakdown are concerned with returning individuals to normal mental or physical life as far as possible. But 'normal' life encompasses an enormous range of states of mental and physical activity. There are major ethical questions relating to the classification of people as mental patients anyway, but these questions become even stronger if we are going to imply that mental health is in some sense an absolute. Common sense forces us to admit that some modes of behaviour are so embarrassing, or so anti-social, or so dangerous that they need to be adjusted to enable the patient to survive in society. But such a view, even if we regard behaviour as operating on a cline from mediocre normality to spectacular idiocy, does not require that we insist on public behaviour converging on a set of preconceived patterns of well-adjustment. It may be one of the functions of schools to detect deviance that is likely to be dangerous; it is not one of the functions to prevent deviance that is not likely to be dangerous. Indeed, we might want to argue that schools should be in the business of creating (fruitful) deviance.

There are occasions when teachers have to deal with anti-social and dangerously deviant behaviour and it would be ridiculous to argue that they should not be equipped to do this effectively. But within the boundaries of socially acceptable behaviour, there must be a wide freedom of choice available to students. And this is particularly important in language work. We may accept Stevick's arguments[12] about the necessity to help learners to use language as deeply and realistically as possible, but this need not lead us to the position of Moskowitz that learning will benefit from students having wholesome relationships with classmates. It is not only that much learning, understanding and discovery seems to have emerged from distinctly unwholesome rivalries and jealousies in the past,[13] but also that we cannot define a 'wholesome' relationship — they come in infinite varieties and our responsibility must be limited to discouraging unwholesome ones. To illustrate one aspect of this argument, let us consider an exercise in Moskowitz.[14] The exercise is called *I like you — you're different*, and the affective purposes of the exercise are listed as:

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[12] E W Stevick. *Op cit.*, 1976.

[13] See *eg* J D Watson. *The double helix*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968.

> To encourage students to feel proud of their differences rather than feeling the need to be conformists.
>
> To encourage an open attitude toward others and their differences.

The basic procedure is given as follows:

> Before giving the assignment, introduce the activity as follows:
>
> > 'Very often we feel it's important to be like other people, and we worry if we feel that we're different. At times it's fine to be like others, but it's also important to accept and be proud of our differences. There are many ways that we are like each other in this class, but there are also things about us that are not true of anyone else in this class.
> >
> > For tomorrow write down on a card three things you feel good about that make you different from everyone else in the class. That is, they are not true of anyone else here.'
>
> Tell the students to write their names on the cards turned in and not to tell anyone what they wrote. Announce that you will collect the cards and read them aloud, and that they will guess the identity of the people.

Let us first be clear that this procedure, with an experienced and sympathetic teacher, could produce an exciting lesson. This is not the point at issue. What is important is whether the structure is misleading in terms of its own affective purposes, and whether these purposes are themselves undesirable. First, we may ask whether there is not a basic confusion between what we make public and what we keep private in our lives. 'Feeling proud' is not (if the words are intended to be taken seriously) something which we normally express overtly and publicly. Furthermore, we shall, if we are at all sensitive, feel proud of some of our differences and ashamed of some others; indeed we may not be sure which we should be proud of and which ashamed of. If humanistic education is really concerned with feelings like pride, self-image, *etc* then it must consider them with more subtlety than in this example. There is here a direct conflict between the public mode of the classroom and the private individuality of the deep feelings which are being referred to so glibly. The experienced teacher may use this to create an exciting lesson by specifically pushing the differences towards the socially acceptable ones which can be made public and by tacitly discouraging those which are causes of genuine internal conflict to individual students. To do the opposite, and cause a student to make public, in a classroom setting, what is intimate and worrying, is to break down inhibitions in a way that may be necessary for a therapist dealing with extreme cases of mental disturbance, but which is quite inappropriate with a presumably normal student. And anyway, teachers do not have the expertise, experience and training to deal with such public avowals of private tensions. No doubt students are able to distance themselves from such intrusions adequately, but it is important to note that the procedure cannot have any genuine relationship with the avowed purposes, because the procedure is public and pedagogic, and any concern with the stated purposes in education can only be indirect.

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[14] G Moskowitz. *Op cit.*, p. 93.

An affectively-based methodology

We do not need to talk about affective variables all the time in order to include them in our methodology. Nor do we need an analysis of affective variables in order to build it into our syllabuses.

The first principle of any genuine relationship between human beings should be that of mutual respect, and this entails accepting the other members of the group as what they are, and leaving them with the freedom to be what they are. An affectively-based methodology needs to be based in part on a classroom organisation which is sufficiently free to enable students to make their own initiatives on their own terms in any matters which relate to their deeper feelings. If they wish to talk about political or personal issues they, like any other persons, should be free to negotiate the terms on which they will do it. But it must be recognised that topics in which there is likely to be considerable ego-involvement cannot be forced on students compulsorily without risking the creation of the alienation that such topics are supposed to be preventing. True affective teaching is far more likely to emerge in the following educational contexts:

> those where staff-student contact takes place over a long period so that participants have time to build up a genuine relationship,
>
> those where teachers perform their tasks efficiently but with a consistent regard for the feelings and variable needs of students,
>
> those where there is a great deal of unstructured staff-student contact,
>
> those where the staff are confident of the abilities of students to succeed,

16

those where students are confident that the staff understand exactly why they are doing what they do,

those where the staff visibly respect each other and work together as a team.

In other words, successful affective teaching is more likely to emerge when students join a community in which they are provided with an example of the desired behaviour patterns than when the patterns are built into some kind of syllabus structure.

But this is not to say that there cannot be a link between syllabus design and the engagement of the student's deepest motivations. Such a link will be established, within the context of the community referred to above, whenever language work is demanded in realistic situations within the classroom — that is, whenever fluency activity takes place.[15] The whole point about fluency activities is that they allow the initiative, within the context of the exercise, to remain with the students, who can decide how much or how little to contribute of themselves. Those who wish to remain inhibited can remain so, those who wish to be extrovert can be so, but the coercion of the educational structure is minimised by the methodology, not diverted to the affective domain.

To summarise: the point about an affective education is that the teacher should know what is undesirable behaviour at the extremes, but should **not** know precisely what should be desirable behaviour. Affective education should be built on a methodology for freedom, not on a set of affective purposes.

The humanistic paradox

Humanistic psychology and education are both committed to two propositions which make description and discussion difficult. These propositions are that the starting point should be human experience, and that man is essentially whole — the human experience cannot usefully be divided up into discrete parts. Such propositions are a convenient corrective to the tendency to see human beings as bundles of isolated features, but they remain elusive when described in print, for the written mode necessarily consists of a sequence of separate sentences. One result of this is that descriptions of what to do in humanistic teaching may easily be converted into sets of separate instructions, and thus lose their wholeness and integrity. Another is that description of humanistic experiences may pose problems which may not arise for people working in more analytic traditions. Stevick[16] has attempted to avoid this difficulty by deliberately approaching his record of personal experiences through a variety of devices — essays, poems, views of his own activity from other people, and so on. Because the viewpoint changes, and the emphasis shifts from intellectual to affective in different parts of the book, the picture may be more complete than in, for example, the consistent expository prose of *Memory, meaning and method.*[17] But the earlier book has one important merit compared with the later, which is that it is possible to argue with it. It is of course possible to argue with parts of the later book, but as a whole we can only agree with the experience, or not — on the basis of its closeness to our own needs and expectations — just as we do with a novel. In part, the two books can be seen as examples, within the same tradition, of first the rational and then the experiential mode of communication. Both undoubtedly have value, and they are in no sense mutually exclusive, but there are some arguments for considering the rational mode as more important in discussion of teaching. These arguments are particularly significant since humanistic teaching seems to attract those who are disposed to reject analytical modes of argument as dry, academic and inhumane. This line of reasoning (or unreasoning) is wrong at a fundamental level, and it seems worthwhile to spell out the reasons for it being wrong.

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[15] C J Brumfit. *Accuracy and fluency*. Practical English teacher, 1 (3), 1980.

A defence of reason in a humanistic context

Teaching is an art in which the relationship between human beings, between teacher and taught, is crucial to real success. This is one way of distinguishing teaching from training, for the latter can be successful simply via a series of instructions, but the former, necessarily involving basic moral and psychological issues, engages the whole persons of both teachers and learners. However, having said this, it is difficult to add a great deal that is illuminating to those who have not experienced teaching already. Learning to teach is not to pick up formulae but to act on internalised principles — to borrow terminology from religious instruction, we are concerned not with outward and visible signs, but with inward and spiritual graces. The signs are the conventions of particular times and places, but the internal motivation and sensitivity of the good teacher will transcend the limitations of particular local conventions through the process of relating to people — the class. Each teacher re-creates the principles of teaching in relation to each new class and each new student. Some teachers do it better than others, of course, but all teachers will attest to gradually getting a 'feel' for teaching as they become more experienced. We can analyse this feeling, but the analysis will not lead to experience — it must come after the event — and the event can only occur in the process of teaching. Analysis concerns itself with facts; teaching 'feel' is concerned with values. The values are the most important aspect of teaching, but in the public domain we only have facts available for scrutiny, for we cannot live values in print, we can only refer to them, and careful reference turns rapidly to analysis.

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[16] E W Stevick. *Op cit.*, 1980.

[17] E W Stevick. *Op cit.*, 1976.

Because of this, it is dangerous to assume that intellectual analysis and description of events can be a substitute for experience. But it is equally dangerous to assume that experience, however sensitive, can be a substitute for analysis. We have no procedure other than analysis for checking that our subjectively-perceived experiences tally with those of other people, and there are plenty of examples of well-meaning subjective experiences turning into horrifying objective ones. Any of us who work in service professions, especially when we are involved with young people, has a particular responsibility to monitor our own activities all the time, and always to be suspicious of our own beliefs and motives. Only by constantly testing our assumptions and principles against the ideas of other people, only by making these assumptions and principles as explicit as possible so that other people can tear them to pieces, can we avoid the risk of exploiting our students and colleagues or, worse still, of harming them unintentionally. Any movement which over-emphasises experience risks degenerating towards moral chaos, for there are no shared safeguards.[18] Perhaps before Stalin and Hitler romantic naivety was forgivable, but the price of liberty now must be constant suspicion, and we cannot afford to rely on intuitive experience — not because it is less reliable than publicly reasoned discussion, but because its workings cannot by definition be publicly scrutinised. Rational criticism can be used to evil ends, but it is accessible and no other basis for belief is.

Criticism must be responsible. We should make the maximum effort to understand what we criticise; we must be willing to have our minds changed; we must couch criticisms in forms that can be falsified; we must assist our opponents to attack our views by always being willing to continue the argument. But only by doing this can we prevent ourselves slipping imperceptibly into a commitment which cannot be rationally justified, and there is then no way of distinguishing a good from a bad commitment. By acting like this we lose something — spontaneity, innocence, the willingness to act instinctively — but we do gain responsibility and we diminish risk. Knowing twentieth-century power and twentieth-century history as we do, we cannot responsibly accept moral risks, however attractive the alleged gain.

This discussion has not related language teaching to our deepest impulses. Language teaching is — numerically — a mass movement, and any mass movement related to our deepest impulses is to be feared and dreaded. It has related language teaching to some important issues which will not disappear. Whether or not this approach, which derives mainly from the views of Popper,[19] can be called humanistic is for the reader to judge. But whatever we call it, humanity needs it.

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[18] If this is doubted, A Blumberg and R T Golembiewski: *Learning and change in groups* (Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1976), on the encounter group movement, should be consulted.

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[19] See *eg* K Popper. *Objective knowledge*. Oxford: OUP 1972, and *Unended quest*. London: Collins/Fontana, 1976.

SELF-CONFIDENCE THROUGH SELF-DISCLOSURE: THE PURSUIT OF MEANINGFUL COMMUNICATION

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As I sat at my desk about to start this article, a memory flashed before me of a time when I was in art class at the age of twelve. The teacher asked us to create a poster to show something that was important to us. Though I have never been an artist, I recall being proud of what I produced: a group of children, smiling, as they held hands forming a complete circle. Each child was from a different country; the globe of the world was in the middle of the group. I labelled the poster 'As it should be'.

Reflecting back, that was probably a belief and a dream I had, for wars were prevalent when I grew up. I have not thought of that poster all these years, but it occurs to me now, as I seemed to know then, that people the world over have so much in common. So often we are conscious of **differences** among cultures and even stress them in the teaching of foreign languages. What I realised as a result of my unconscious directing me back to that childhood scene is that one intent of this article is to focus on how much we are all **alike**, you and I and all the others, no matter in what country you may be, sitting with this journal in your hand.

And I found this same truth to exist when I studied classroom interaction for a number of years. Learners from different cultures have similar feelings and reactions to teacher behaviour: negative feelings develop toward a critical, rejecting, highly directive teacher, while positive feelings occur when learning from a warm, accepting, understanding teacher. These behaviours and their subsequent effects on students have often tended to affect the achievement of learners.

Now that I have worked with humanistic techniques of teaching foreign languages for some time, I find myself constantly delighted by discovering once more the universality of people and how much alike we are. Some of the purposes of using humanistic communication activities to teach foreign languages are to improve self-esteem, to develop positive thinking, to increase self-understanding, to build greater closeness among students, and to discover the strengths and goodness in oneself and one's classmates. These goals are largely satisfied through the process of sharing — sharing of memories, experiences, feelings, wishes, values, and fantasies, along with giving positive feedback to one another. It is through such types of communication that it has become vividly clear to me that people of all cultures do have the same basic psychological needs: the need to have close relations with others, the need to be listened to attentively, the need to know and understand themselves better, and the need to feel more positive in their outlook on life.

I have witnessed the change of atmosphere, the increase in spirit, the growth of closer relationships, and the excitement that prevails as groups relate to one another along these less superficial lines. In addition, many people have shared with me, both verbally and in writing, what very positive emotions they experienced through such communication. These contacts have been during methods courses and workshops I've given in which the teachers participated in humanistic activities. The testimonials are often amazing:

> 'I came to this conference dejected, yes, very depressed. I can't believe I have done a complete reversal in my feelings as a result of this experience. I made contacts with strangers here, and we remained close friends throughout the rest of the conference. We are already looking forward to a reunion at next year's conference.'

> 'As a result of this workshop, I have a new outlook on teaching. I had given up and had lost my enthusiasm. I thought I had tried everything. I can't wait to try these activities with my students.'

These are but two of many similar stories told to me. Am I being egotistical to tell you all this? I think not, because the point is that I am not causing these results. It is the use of techniques which fulfill basic human needs in people that deserves the credit.

What does this suggest then? It seems that most of us, teachers included, have not had sufficient positive feedback about ourselves for the **person** we are (not just for the teacher we are), or enough closeness with enough people, or as much attention as was desired when we needed to share and to be heard. Many contacts with others have been on a more superficial level so that the individual we are is not known by many.

It is exciting to me to have foreign language teachers report the positive results they get when using humanistic activities with their students. It is equally rewarding to note that the convictions of their worth stem from the teachers themselves experiencing the very feelings such activities are intended to promote. How needy we all can be, teachers included, in such basic areas. How fitting it is too that in school, in our foreign language classes, we can help satisfy such important components to sound emotional growth and health through the vehicle of truly meaningful communication.

I had no idea when I planned this article that I would be sharing some of my personal thoughts and experiences along with the informational aspects. However, it strikes me as being in keeping with the theme of this article since sharing is at the heart of it.

Personalisation has not been personal enough

You may wonder what is special about the sharing in humanistic activities that does not take place in our typical interaction, let alone in the foreign language class. Generally when we meet someone, superficial bits of information are exchanged: 'where are you from?', 'whom do you know?', 'do we both know the same person?' A timely topic such as the weather, the high cost of living, a news event, or a current illness that is spreading may be discussed. Since a good amount of 'typical' communication consists of trivia and time fillers, often these are the themes students in foreign language classes are taught to discuss.

For a long time foreign language teachers have recognised the importance of personalising the content. A dialogue is learned or a story is read. Based on this content, the teacher asks personalised questions of students. The dialogue deals with school; the teacher asks: 'what are your favourite subjects in school?' The story is about going to a restaurant; the teacher inquires: 'what are your favourite foods?' Though the principle of personalisation is a good one, in practice the questions posed often lack interest value for the student responding as well as those who may be listening. Many personalised questions used in foreign language instruction elicit information that is factual, superficial, and unimportant. The result is that students do not learn things that are **relevant** about one another and so they do not actually get to **know** one another.

Outside school, relationships built on exchanges like this would not be close ones. They would be relationships with people whom we might call our 'acquaintances'. Perhaps much of the loneliness which exists in many people is due in part to the lack of contact with others which is sufficiently personalised. What then does more personalised humanistic communication sound like and how does it change communication?

A model for communication

An element that is missing in typical interaction is self-disclosure, revealing to others things about us which are meaningful to us and which they would not otherwise know. Among these would be the sharing of experiences, memories, feelings, values, wishes, daydreams, fantasies, insights, and strengths. What happens during this type of communication will be clearer, if we look at a model called the Johari Window.[1] This model is a communication window through which information is given and received. There are four parts to this window, so picture a large square divided into four squares. The first square is the Public Arena, which consists of information both you and I and others know about me. This is therefore public knowledge. The second area, the Blind Spot, contains those things you know about me but that I am not aware of myself. The Hidden Area is the opposite of the Blind Spot; it consists of what I keep to myself so others do not know this at all. The Unknown Area is made up of those things neither others nor I know about. Some of these may still be at the unconscious level.

Ideally, the largest area should be the Public Arena, where both others and I know a great deal about me, while the other areas should be small. The way this can happen is through my sharing things about myself with others and by others giving me feedback about myself. In that way my Blind Spot and Hidden Area will become smaller as my Public Arena gets larger. As a result of the sharing and feedback I may gain some new insights about myself which were previously buried in the Unknown Area. If I now share these with others they will further increase my Public Arena. This kind of interaction in relationships is much sounder, healthier, and more satisfying than one where people keep to themselves and reveal little to others, where the Public Arena is very small and the Hidden Area and Blind Spot are large.

Humanistic communication activities help increase the Public Arena while decreasing the other three areas. It is in the process of self-disclosure, of sharing oneself, that feelings of warmth, closeness, and caring develop as students get to know one another at a deeper, far more interesting level, one which becomes an exciting adventure in discovering oneself and others. It is important to note that the teacher is included in the sharing as well.

The importance of self-disclosure

Because he believed it to be the most important area that can be studied, noted therapist and teacher Sidney M Jourard spent many years conducting research on self-disclosure, which he states is communicating my world to you so that you understand it. In his book *The transparent self*,[2] Jourard makes a number of pertinent statements about self-disclosure that have potential transfer value for us as foreign language educators. In his role as therapist, Jourard was fascinated at how often patients stated that he knew more about them than anyone else did. He wondered whether there was a connection between their reluctance to be known and their need for therapy. In research he conducted Jourard found that there is even a great lack of self-disclosure in the very relationships where people tend to be themselves more so: those with the family. Parents and children do not tend to know one another, nor do spouses. And, I might add, in school, where many years of one's life are spent, true sharing of oneself is greatly lacking as well. Yet self-disclosure, letting others truly know us, is important to sound mental health.

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[1] J Luft. *Of human interaction*. Palo Alto, California: Mayfield Publishing Co, 1969.

[2] S M Jourard. *The transparent self*. Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1964.

Jourard says that we cannot get to know ourselves unless we disclose what we are like to others and see how they respond to us. Others can know us only to the extent that we disclose ourselves and can respond accurately only to the extent that we let them know us as we are. Therefore it is important to disclose our true self to others so we can see the results of how others respond to how we actually are. Individuals who present a false self to others get the falseness responded to and feel that others do not know them. And those who do not disclose themselves to others at all have an unknown person reacted to by others. Their lack of self-disclosure is therefore responded to, with the persons becoming more and more removed from being their real selves. Not letting others know you leads to self-alienation, not knowing what you are like, which can result in fear and distrust of oneself. Some therapists have regarded self-alienation as being at the heart of the neurotic personality. Jourard feels that self-alienation is so widespread that we do not even recognise it nor its importance.

According to Jourard, another important phenomenon is that not until a person is his/her real self will the person continue to grow. So when people inhibit themselves from being themselves, they inhibit their personal growth as well. Carried on for a period of time, this can lead to adults with a side of them that is still a child who has not grown up. This is different from the concept in transactional analysis of the 'healthy, fun-loving, spontaneous child' found in well-adjusted people.[3]

What happens when we do not truly know others whom we contact is that we tend to base our feelings on false impressions and insufficient information. As a result, we may misunderstand a number of people and feel uncomfortable, distrustful, or indifferent in their presence. Although we may be a certain type of person, when only 'small talk' is exchanged, we may seem to be another type of person. Others remain strangers to us when we do not know what they think, feel, or believe and are not aware of meaningful experiences in their lives.

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[3] E Berne. *Games people play: the psychology of human relationships.* New York: Ballantine Books, 1973 (Originally published 1964).

Superimposed upon a language learning situation, we can see that the content students converse about in the target language can affect their feelings about themselves and others in the class. Too often trivial statements are learned and irrelevant or superficial topics discussed. Without self-disclosing topics, students and teachers remain a mystery to one another.

If, instead, the content allows us to share our real self so others get to truly know us, what happens? For one thing, prejudgements and false perceptions can change. We also discover similarities we have with others in our feelings, ideas, hopes, memories, experiences, *etc*, as well as differences. We learn what we have in common and also how we are unique.

In his work, Jourard developed self-disclosure questionnaires for getting pairs of people who do not know each other deeply acquainted rather quickly through interacting with the questions they contain. The questions are rated according to their level of intimacy: low, medium, high. A fascinating thing to note is that any question on these forms which one would typically find asked in foreign language classes was **always** rated **low** in intimacy value, *eg* 'what are your favourite hobbies and interests?', 'how many brothers and sisters do you have?', 'where would you like to go on a trip?'[4] This is not to suggest that teachers of foreign languages should be expecting students to reveal the most intimate details of their lives in class, but it does suggest that we have often done just the opposite, sharing little that serves to make closer bonds of understanding, empathy, and awareness in our students — some of the very purposes we so freely give for learning someone else's language. Our concern has been **how** to communicate in another language. It is time now to focus on **what** to communicate in that language.

A goal of foreign language study is the understanding and acceptance of other cultures. But spreading acceptance of different cultures may best begin **right in the foreign language class** by learning to understand and accept oneself and those who meet there daily. Then foreign language teachers can more easily facilitate the understanding of **other** people, **other** worlds.

Guidelines to observe

People will share or self-disclose only if they feel safe and not threatened by so doing. Therefore, a positive and accepting climate is essential where others listen attentively, non-judgementally, empathetically, and with good will. In keeping with these notions, there are two important guidelines that I strongly recommend when humanistic communication activities are used: focus on the **positive aspects** and use **low-risk activities.** The first refers to such things as sharing pleasant memories, identifying one's strengths and those of others, and focusing on the positive occurrences that happen to us each day. Conversely, conversations would **not** deal with unpleasant memories, pointing out what one considers to be one's own faults or those of others, or dwelling on the negative events that happen to us.

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[4] S M Jourard. *Self-disclosure: an experimental analysis of the transparent self.* New York: Wiley. 1971, pp. 206, 215, 229.

Selecting low-risk activities means that the themes should be safe rather than **too** personal or threatening. Examples of high-risk topics, to be avoided, would be sharing things you have done which make you feel ashamed or times when you have failed. These are not only high-risk but also focus on the negative. Reversing these themes changes them to low-risk activities: things you feel proud of that you have done or times when you have met with success.

Although several humanistic activities have been developed that go into negative aspects of life, I recommend dealing only with the positive aspects because the feelings developed in class will then be positive too, emotions the teachers and students can handle more readily. The teacher must have far greater skill and training to handle effectively what can happen when students deal with negative topics, experiences, and feedback. A climate of trust and closeness develops from a positive focus, while a single negative encounter may erase the effects of many positive ones. There is no need to nurture the negative aspects that students may see in themselves or their lives since they are generally already convinced of them. The positive focus is an attempt to break through the negative ways students may think, feel, or believe about themselves and change them into more positive views.

Jourard refers to the importance of 'inspiriting' events — those which make one feel joyful, enthusiastic, dedicated, productive, of high morale and energy — instances which are highly satisfying to needs. Among such gratifying experiences he lists 'the receipt of honest and spontaneous praise, acceptance, and endorsement. Having one's individuality accepted, honoured, and acknowledged . . .'[5] These happen to be some of the basic themes and principles underlying a number of humanistic communication activities, which no doubt is why they are so well received.

To transfer learnings from the field of psychology into the foreign language class, it would seem that language educators are in a unique position to assist the personal and emotional growth of students, to help foster self-awareness and awareness of others, to develop high morale and motivation while learning another language. One does not have to be a psychologist or therapist to do so. We merely provide non-threatening activities in which learners share what is most important to them — **themselves** — via the target language.

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[5] S M Jourard. *Op cit.*, 1964, p. 88.

Examples of humanistic communication activities

And now I would like to present a few examples of humanistic activities to give you some more specific ideas of what they are like. The following activities were selected because they illustrate different ways of self-disclosing or sharing oneself as well as what is meant by a positive focus.

Childhood favourites[6]

Humanistic purposes:

to recall pleasant childhood memories,

to exchange these memories with others.

Linguistic purposes:

to practise nouns and possessive adjectives,

to practise asking and answering questions,

to practise the past tense(s).

Levels: all levels.

Size of groups: two.

Materials needed: dittos with questions to be asked and answered.

Procedures:

begin the activity by talking about childhood memories:

> 'We all have a number of childhood memories that made us happy in some way. As we get older, we tend not to think about them very much. Yet to do so helps us relive the good feelings we had at the time.
>
> 'Today we're going to recall some of our favourite things from childhood. You will each have a handout listing some categories and a partner to work with, someone you do not know very well yet. The first person will ask the second person a question, such as 'when you were a child, what was your favourite candy?' After the second person answers, that

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[6] Gertrude Moskowitz. *Caring and sharing in the foreign language class: a sourcebook on humanistic techniques*. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1978, pp. 119–21. Reprinted with permission.

person asks the first person the same question. Do the same with each question, rotating who answers the questions first. Always start each question with the question 'when you were a child, what (who) was your favourite . .?'

'In some cases, your answers will be brief. For other questions, they will be longer. You can ask each other additional questions or make comments, if you wish. As your partner answers, you will find other memories will come back to you. When you finish all the questions on the handout, add some of your own categories to the list and take turns answering them.'

Pass out the ditto. If the students can handle it in the target language, tell them to add 'why?' after each question is asked. Here are some possible categories that can be used:

WHEN YOU WERE A CHILD, WHAT (OR WHO) WAS YOUR FAVOURITE:

Toy? Why?
Candy?
Holiday?
Play activity?
Book or story?
Place to go?
Song?
Outfit?
Comic strip?

Friend? Why?
Grown-up (other than family)?
Teacher?
Relative (not a parent or guardian)?
Memory of snow?
Memory at a beach or pool?
Thing to do that was scary?
Birthday?
TV or radio programme?

When the exercise is completed, ask the students what their reactions to this experience were and what they learned from it. They will often say that it was fun and made them feel good. Ask what other categories the groups thought of. The groups may wish to have a few more rounds based on the categories their classmates thought of. This seemingly simple activity creates a very pleasant atmosphere and smiles on students' faces as they recall happy times they have not consciously thought of for some time. (I invite the reader to try this activity with a family member, a friend, another teacher, *etc*, to experience its effects.)

How strong I am[7]

Humanistic purposes:

to have students assess their own strengths and share these,

to have students give one another positive feedback.

Linguistic purposes:

to practise the first person singular in the present tense,

to practise the second person singular in the present tense,

to practise the use of adjectives describing positive qualities.

Levels: all levels.

Size of groups: about six.

Procedures:

introduce this awareness exercise like this:

> 'We all have many strengths. Some of them we are aware of. However, other people may see strengths in us that we do not realise we have.
>
> 'Take a piece of paper and write down the names of everyone in your group. Below the names, write two of the strengths you see in each person in your group. Then write your own name and list as many of your strengths as you can think of. You will have (length of time) five minutes to write down a number of your strengths and two for each person in your group. You will be sharing what you write later.'

After the class finishes this part of the exercise, continue:

> 'You will then focus on one person at a time. When it is your turn, read all of the strengths you have written about yourself. Then the others in the group will share what strengths they see in you while the student to your right writes them down. When everyone has had a turn, give the list of strengths to the owner of them to keep.'

When the activity is done, ask students to discuss in their small groups and/or the total group:

whether anyone said something that surprised you?

which strengths that someone else said you had meant the most to you?

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[7] G Moskowitz. *Op cit.*, 1978, pp. 87–8. Reprinted with permission.

to what extent was your list of strengths similar to or different from the one others in your group find in you?

what reactions do you have to this activity?

what did you learn from this exercise?

Conclude the activity by discussing at least one or two of the above questions in the total group. This exercise should be used once the students are well enough acquainted to know a number of strengths of their classmates.

Cherished object[8]

Humanistic purposes:

to develop a deeper level of closeness among students,

to encourage students to think about and decide what is precious and meaningful to them,

to enable students to see one another in a more intimate light.

Linguistic purposes:

to practise the past tense(s),

to practise the structure 'It is important to me because . . .

Size of groups: about six to eight.

Levels: intermediate to advanced; beginning groups could do this exercise if provided with simple open-ended statements to complete.

Materials needed: a 'cherished object' from each student.

Procedures:

tell the class to look over all their belongings at home and to decide out of everything they have, what is the most significant and personally meaningful object they own. Ask them to think of why the item is so valuable to them. You can request that they write the answer to this question and bring the object and what they have written to class.

Place the students in groups of six to eight. Have one person at a time in each group show the precious object to the others and share the significance of the item with them. The object, if not too delicate, can be passed around for each to see. Members of the group can ask questions or comment about the object.

When the groups are finished, a display is made of all the objects. The students ask questions about items of interest to them and the owners explain the special significance of their 'cherished object'. If there is not enough time to carry out the activity so fully, after the groups finish sharing, ask for one or two volunteers per group to tell the entire class about their objects and to hold them up. The groups can be asked to volunteer these people themselves. They will tend to select those which were the most unique or sentimental or touching. A display can still be made of the objects with the paragraph each person wrote beside them. (The paragraphs can be turned in ahead of time so you can make corrections and have students recopy their papers.) The class can then read what the students wrote to learn about the special meaning of the objects.

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[8] G Moskowitz. *Op cit.*, 1978, pp. 143–4. Reprinted with permission.

Benefits of humanistic techniques for students

When learning a foreign language, students are often hesitant, reluctant, or even fearful of speaking the language. Teachers who have been using humanistic exercises have been pleasantly surprised to discover that their students become motivated to participate, putting aside their usual inhibitions to speak the language. Here are samples of what teachers have reported in logs they kept during course work from me on methods of teaching humanistic techniques:

> 'In my two years as their teacher, I have never seen these students as excited or vocal in my classes.'
>
> 'No more fighting with students to have them converse in Spanish. The subject of the conversation has become relevant to them (themselves and their friends). They are now eager to share and participate.'

And entries in the logs in which teachers recorded written statements of student reactions to humanistic activities give further evidence of these feelings:

> 'Sometimes it's hard to talk in Italian, but through this activity it became so easy. I couldn't wait to talk!'
>
> 'I found I spoke German without trying to think about it.'
>
> 'I feel more relaxed, more a part of the class, and more able to participate.'
>
> 'This class has meaning to it.'
>
> 'At the beginning of the year, we made quick judgements about our classmates that did not change. But now after hearing what they have to say and seeing them in new ways, we changed those first impressions to better, more accurate ones.'

Are there certain age groups with which humanistic activities are best used? The answer is 'no' for at every age and in every culture we have the same basic needs. It may be that the older we get the 'needier' we become if these are not met. Suffice it to say that it is never too young to provide humanistic experiences for students nor is it ever too old to start to satisfy such unfulfilled needs. Furthermore, awareness strategies can be used to teach any language at any level and with any curriculum.

Two research studies, conducted in twenty-two language classes in grades 7–12, reveal further benefits of humanistic exercises.[9] Students of six different languages, ESOL, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, and Spanish, spanning levels 1–4, were in the studies. For two months their teachers interspersed humanistic activities into the regular curriculum. Three questionnaires were answered by the students before they experienced humanistic activities and again after working with them for two months. A number of statistically significant findings resulted in both studies, indicating that the students improved in their attitudes toward learning the foreign language, their self-image, and their acceptance of classmates. This research supports the impressions teachers have of changes that occur in students when awareness activities are introduced in the language class.

And what about the teachers themselves? I have found them equally enthusiastic, not only about the effects of such strategies on their students, but on themselves in their growth as a teacher and a more fulfilled human being. Here are a couple of sample quotations:

> 'I now understand a creative means of teaching a foreign language and have formed a better self-image.'
>
> 'I am now a better teacher and a more feeling person.'

Human needs transcend cultures

In my travels to other countries and in presenting workshops at conferences attended by teachers from a variety of cultures, I have been overwhelmed by the similarities of reactions to participating in humanistic exercises. Some of the countries from which teachers come that I have worked with are Argentina, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, Spain, Brazil, Portugal, England, France, Haiti, Germany, Italy, Russia, China, Japan, Korea, Iran, Egypt, Israel, French Canada, British Canada, and the islands of Puerto Rico and Hawaii: certainly a diverse cross-section of cultures. And people have been wonderful about sharing (self-disclosing) their experiences with me. Here is one of my favourite examples.

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[9] G Moskowitz. *Effects of humanistic techniques on attitude, cohesiveness, and self-concept of foreign language students.* Modern language journal, **65** (2), Summer 1981, pp. 149–57.

At a workshop I gave, I discovered that a teacher from Russia was present. She told me afterwards that at first she felt very uncomfortable sharing things about herself with those in her group. However, as she participated in the activities that followed, it became easier and easier. By the end of the 2½-hour workshop, she had opened up and found she enjoyed the experience immensely. And to my surprise, she informed me she was taking a copy of *Caring and sharing in the foreign language class* back to Russia to use with her students whom she teaches English.

Correspondence I've received from teachers in different countries bear similar tidings. A teacher in Japan was kind enough to send me a copy of an entry she made in a journal she keeps. In referring to me and my book, she wrote: 'I kept thinking she couldn't have meant this book for an entirely Japanese class in their country!' She wanted to try some of the exercises and finally decided: 'Maybe the time has come for me to risk it. So I did with fear and trepidation.' Her journal entry then filled six pages of exciting results for her both in and out of class. She had the students write their reactions to the experience and stated that the thirty letters she received gave her the 'clear message to continue this kind of thing'.

A male teacher from Indonesia wrote me that he was 'terribly sick' the day he tried a humanistic activity for the first time. However, the class was so 'alive, funny, interesting, and enjoyable' that he forgot his illness. He added that 'it was the liveliest time I ever had since I began teaching English'.

When I began to work with humanistic activities, I never anticipated such universally positive reactions. It has been a lesson I have loved learning and a message worth spreading. Yes! People are alike — they all need to be listened to, cared about, understood, and accepted for the persons they are. And they will share and self-disclose given a safe and non-threatening environment. From witnessing the joy and closeness that develops from just being oneself and sharing that self, I've come to understand how truly important self-disclosure is for personal growth and as a motivator of learning. From now on when I work with a group consisting of people from a variety of cultures and see how enthusiastic, friendly, and close they become through humanistic communication, I shall be reminded of my seventh grade poster and be aware that children's visions can come true. Yes, this is the way it should be.

EXQUISITE CORPSES, MEN OF GLASS AND OULIPO: HARNESSING THE IRRATIONAL TO LANGUAGE LEARNING

Alan Maley, The British Council, China

Introduction

Because the main focus of this article will be on the presentation and discussion of a number of techniques for developing written texts, and because space is limited, I shall not make a lengthy theoretical exposition. A brief outline of the ideas which inform such techniques must perforce suffice. These ideas are not all dignified with the cloak of academic respectability, though many are by now widely accepted. Few can be experimentally proven. Most seem to have accreted from a combination of common sense, curiosity, hunch and experience in the pedagogically permissive seventies! (Oh pendulum, where is thy swing?) No attempt will be made to justify them. They are simply an interlocking system of beliefs/principles which underlies the techniques to be discussed later.[1]

Basic tenets

With regard to language acquisition it is held:

- that the unconscious process of **acquisition** is at least as important as the conscious, effortful process of **learning**[2] (*pace* Krashen).
- that the acquisition of a foreign language is akin to that of mother tongue acquisition at least in so far as learners go through a roughly similar series of developmental stages.
- that learner **error** is a necessary part of the learning process, and **correction** may often be unproductive.
- that learners acquire the language at their own individual **rate** and employing their own individual **strategies**. The learner is not a pint-pot into which the language is poured, but a home-brewery kit in which teacher input ferments.

With regard to views of language it is held:

- that **usage** is at a higher level in the hierarchy than **use.**[3] Use is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for communication.

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[1] For a more lengthy treatment see the article by Alan Maley in *Language and communication*, 1 (2), 1981 (Chinese University of Hong Kong).

[2] Steven Krashen. *The monitor model for adult second language performance* in Dulay *et al., eds.* Viewpoints on English as a second language. Regent, 1977.

[3] H G Widdowson. *Teaching language as communication*. OUP, 1978.

- that ability to handle **discourse** is likewise a higher level skill than the ability to handle **sentences**.
- that meaning is not 'given', but is in some sense the result of negotiation between speakers, or between writer/reader and text.
- that the **sociolinguistic** features of language (role, intention, setting, *etc*) are of fundamental importance in assigning meaning to text.

With regard to programme design:

- that a once-for-all **needs analysis** is insufficient to take account of the evolving needs of learners, and that it may reinforce a 'product' view of the learning process.
- that, whenever possible, **authentic text** should be used for input, and **authentic participation** and **output** encouraged.
- that **'a priori' syllabuses** could in many cases be replaced by **'a posteriori' checklists**. In other words, provided interesting input at an appropriate level is devised, all the necessary language features could in any case be derived from it.

With regard to methodology:

- that **fluency** activities must be accorded at least equal status with **accuracy** activities.[4]
- that **task-centred** activities are to be preferred to purely **language-centred** activities, and that the level of complexity of the task can be graded to take account of the linguistic level of the learner, rather than grading the language and then constructing unrealistic exercises.
- that language skills should be learnt in integrated series which approximate to normal behaviour (*eg* in solving a problem it may be necessary first to read, then to discuss or consult, then to do, then to write, then to report back), rather than in isolation.
- that learning should be based on **interaction**, not on one-way traffic from teacher to student.

With regard to learners as people:

- that the threshold of learner-resistance to learning, induced by the threat they feel under, should be lowered.
- that as a result, they will feel able to **take risks**.
- that learning should thus be **creative** rather than **defensive**.[5]

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[4] C J Brumfit. *'Communicative' language teaching: an educational perspective* in C J Brumfit and K Johnson, *eds*. The communicative approach to language teaching. OUP, 1979.

[5] E W Stevick. *Teaching languages: a way and ways*. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1980.

- that **co-operation** is generally to be preferred to **competition**, though there may be room for both.
- that **different learning** styles should be catered for.
- that **learner initiative** should be encouraged within an overall framework of **teacher control**.[6]

Methodological principles

Given then that the aim is to develop acquisition and fluency through meaningful inputs in a non-judgemental but organised framework of co-operative learning, what principles can be used as a basis for developing materials and techniques? The following have been found to generate a rich array of such techniques:

Activities should be **task-centred**. That is, some non-linguistic objective (building something, solving a problem, *etc*) should predominate. The language is used as part of the process of arriving at the outcome.

Information exchange should be an integral part of the activity. This may be done for example by splitting the information necessary to the successful completion of the task between several people, or by comparing divergent outcomes to an identical task.

The **unexpected** should be sought as a stimulus. This can be achieved by creating an information gap, or by exploiting the principle of **ambiguity** or **randomness**.

'Homo faber' and 'Homo ludens'

In the remainder of this article I wish to discuss the application of the above three principles, but especially the third, to the development of activities which, although they produce written outcomes, involve other language skills too.

My contention would be that many language teaching materials are either excessively serious or overpoweringly trivial. That, whereas in the acquisition of the mother-tongue (and in its subsequent use) the function of language play is integral and critical, this function is rarely encouraged in the acquisition of the foreign language. Yet the ludic function should surely be taken seriously, and an attempt made to incorporate it into the foreign language learning process.

It is by playing with language that children learn not to be afraid of it, discover by trial and error what can and cannot be done with it, and derive pleasure from the sheer fact of manipulating it. (Listening to children talking to themselves in bed before going to sleep, or on the loo, is very revealing of the inventiveness they display.)

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[6] *Ibid.*

Is there any reason why learners of a foreign language should not do likewise? In this century it is the Surrealists who have most actively extended our understanding of the possibilities for stretching the language through play. Our[7] starting point therefore was the question 'what would happen if we applied surrealist techniques to the foreign language learning situation?' The techniques described below form part of the answer. Examples will be given of techniques to develop word play, sentence play, text play and the making of poems.

Portmanteau Words

After explaining what portmanteau words are and how they work (*eg* brunch, franglais, instamatic), students are given a set of such words to work on, *eg* penumbrella, hifijacking, telexceptional, bankerchief, tipplosive, mushrheumatism.

Each person is then asked to write down what each word means. Also to try and derive the two original words from which the blend is made up (*eg* banker — handkerchief). This is followed by comparison of versions in pairs, then in groups of four, before reporting back to the whole class.

Students are then given a list of paired words,

interview	—	interrogation
computer	—	error
parcel	—	cellophane
infiltrate	—	traitor
interaction	—	reactionary
hell	—	melody
practical	—	callous
greedy	—	defence

Again working individually, they try to form a portmanteau word from each pair of words, then to assign it a dictionary meaning, *eg* **computerror** = state of panic caused by serious mistakes in data processing; **hellody** = disparaging word used by older people to refer to punk music. (Not to be confused with **helloday** = holiday with parents-in-law.) Versions are again compared before reporting back to the whole class.

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[7] The ideas in this article were elaborated in co-operation with Alan Duff.

If the idea is now catching on, students can be asked to create their own portmanteau words as an assignment to be discussed in a future lesson.

Cadavre exquis

In this activity each student is asked to write a sentence on the pattern 'what would a(n) X do with a(n) Y?' (*eg* 'what would a boxer do with a canary?') No-one shows the sentence to anyone else. The papers are then folded so that the question cannot be seen, and exchanged with someone else.

Each person now writes down an answer to the question which is imagined to be on the concealed part of the paper (*eg* 'he'd write to his mother with it', 'he'd use it to mend his watch' *etc*). Papers are then unfolded and read out. Preferably this should be done in pairs. Each pair then works on trying to find a credible explanation for the two apparently incompatible sentences! Only then would there be reporting back to the whole class or to other pairs. (Clearly other types of sentence can be used, *eg* 'what would happen if X?', 'why does/do X Y?' *etc.*)

Newspaper headlines

For this you need to collect a number (twenty or so) of odd, puzzling or ambiguous headlines. These can then be used in a number of ways for sentence and text play.

- Working either alone or in pairs, students are asked to choose five headlines and to continue them into a coherent passage. No words may be added or deleted but punctuation marks can be introduced. Here is an example of one passage which results:

  'Is the franc about to slide down a snake?
  Is speech still free at Speakers' Corner?
  Ten years on: has age taught us wisdom?
  Revolution on the turntable?
  Give the BBC time!'

- In pairs students use all the headlines to create a coherent passage. This time **parts** of headlines may be used (a 'part' being at least two words). The passage may be as long as they like to make it.
- Each person is allotted eight headlines. From these that person is to create the opening of an article. There is no need to use all the words this time, but a word may only be used twice if it can be assigned a different meaning, *eg* **bear** (n) and (v).

In all these activities the discussion and comparison of versions forms an essential part.

Making poems

— Alphabet poems:

Students are asked, in pairs, to write down as many names of towns in Britain, (or the USA, or the world) as they can. Access to maps or atlases is obviously helpful. Each pair then prepares a rhythmic poem using the names they have collected, *eg*

'Oxford, Cambridge, Peterborough, Crewe,
London, Southend, Brighton and Kew,
Axminister, Westminster, Battersea and Bow,
Leicester, Gloucester, Winchelsea and Stowe' *etc*.

There is no necessity for the lines to rhyme, though clearly the result is more satisfying if they do. The same procedure can be adopted using people's first or family names, the names of animals, trees, flowers, machines, or whatever. It is important that the results are read aloud, since rhythm is one of the main points of the activity.

— Computer poems

Students are given a single sentence, *eg* 'no-one knows the person he hates'. Individually they are to try to write as many sentences as possible using all and only the words of the sentence, *eg* 'no-one hates the person he knows', 'the person knows no-one he hates'. In pairs, students check to see whether they have all the possible combinations (and none of the impossible ones, *eg* 'the person hates he knows no-one'). Together they then arrange the sentences in the order they think makes the best sense to form a poem. Sentences which will guarantee a sufficient number of variants are not easily found. However, both these also work well:

'The man I thought I knew had not yet left.'
'Nothing is ever for ever.'

— Group poem

Students work in groups of six. You give each group one word (*eg* **now, red, cats, pain** *etc*). Each person in the group writes one sentence which the word suggests (without consulting neighbours!). The sentence may or may not contain the word. The slips of paper from each group are then collected and exchanged with another group (*ie* Group A gets Group D's sentences, Group D gets Group C's, Group C gets Group B's, Group B gets Group A's).

Each group now has six sentences to work on, all relating to a single theme. The task of each group is to arrange these sentences in the best possible order to form a poem. They are allowed to discard one sentence if they wish, and/or to write one new sentence. Minor changes to grammar are also allowed to help the cohesion of the fragments. Groups then present their poems to other groups.

Conclusion

In *Great expectations* Miss Haversham imperiously commands Pip to 'Play boy! Play!' A nice irony in view of the fact that one cannot order someone to do something which is quintessentially voluntary. No more would I wish to suggest that teachers and learners be forced to play, or to occupy their whole time with play. 'All Quirk and no play' may make Jack a dull boy, but the reverse is also true. However I would assert that techniques such as those I have described lay serious claim to our attention.

They can be shown to be fully congruent with the principles described under **Basic tenets** above. The level of language inputs and of tasks can both be controlled to suit different groups of learners. What is more, such techniques appear to respond to a real need on the part of learners to engage with the language meaningfully — somehow to get inside it. They are certainly not regarded as trivial, since learners quickly realise that they allow them to slip the noose of excessively formal procedures.

It could be objected that such techniques do not produce highly polished literature. That is true. Nor are they intended to. Equally it could be objected that such felicities as they do produce are the result of chance happening rather than effortful volition. This is probably true also. And if it is, it strengthens rather than weakens the case, since most innovation in the mother tongue proceeds by precisely the same route. Long live the Three Princes of Serendip! 'What larks!'[8]

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[8] See also Francis Debyser and J M Care: *Jeu, langage et créativité*. Larousse and Hachette, 1978, Oulipo: *La littérature potentielle*. (idées, 289) Gallimard, 1973, and Gianni Rodari: *Grammatica della fantasia*. Turin: Einaudi, 1973.

OFF STAGE: INFORMAL DRAMA IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Margaret Early, and Carole Tarlington, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

The development of a communicative approach to the teaching of English as a second or foreign language has brought with it an increase in the use of drama in the curriculum.[1] However, the nature and potential of drama as a means both of expression and of learning is often not fully understood by many educators, even those using drama. The very newness of the educational drama literature accounts for this, for enormous advances have been made in the field in the last ten years, largely through the work of major British drama educators Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton. As well, a sudden plethora of drama materials and research has recently emerged from England, the USA, Canada and Australia. This has resulted in more precise statements about the nature of drama and the role it plays in learning.

This paper deals with the nature of drama and demonstrates, by results of a model unit, a dramatic approach to the teaching of communications.

What is drama?

Many misconceptions surround the word 'drama' and considerable confusion exists as to what its role is. The words 'drama' and 'theatre' are synonymous for many teachers who describe both in terms of sculpture, plays, lines, performances, audiences, proud relatives and beaming principals. This is a description not of 'drama' but of 'theatre' and while the two are related they are different.

Drama is developmental in nature. A group process, it involves learners in spontaneous situations which enable them to project themselves into imagined roles, as a way of exploring and expressing ideas.

Theatre on the other hand involves performance and is largely concerned with communication between actors and audience. Indeed theatre depends on an audience for its very existence, and does not exist independently. Theatre is devised to entertain, to inform, to move emotionally and to provide aesthetic experiences. The purposes of drama are quite different.

Drama's objectives centre around language development, personal awareness, group co-operation, sensory awareness, imaginative growth, problem solving and exploring of issues. At their most successful, drama experiences change participants, both cognitively and affectively, leading them to new understandings. Rather than acting in plays (theatre), participants are 'burnished through the play'.

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[1] Also called developmental drama, creative drama, child drama, spontaneous drama and educational drama.

Drama teachers have long been aware that most students in drama programmes develop superior communication skills, display more confidence in themselves, and are more sympathetic to others. Stern's research[2] confirms this for second language learners. As a result of her investigations she concluded that drama encourages the operation of the following psychological factors in the participant:

- heightened self-esteem,
- motivation,
- spontaneity,
- increased capacity for empathy,
- lowered sensitivity to rejection.

According to Stern, these factors facilitate communication. Second language students who participated in drama experiences learned that they were capable of expressing themselves in realistic communicative situations, were motivated because of the approach, found safety in role play, and developed empathy through experiencing other's roles.

As well as providing the appropriate psychological climate for language learning, drama provides the vehicle, because language and drama are inseparable. Indeed, in many ways, drama **is** language. 'It is as if drama is a cobweb, and language its strands: you cannot conceive of one without the other.'[3] Drama activities involve language in its very broadest sense, 'as a nonverbal/verbal code for encapsulating and sharing experience. It is a currency for handling meaning'.[4] In a well executed drama programme, participants will be required to:

- practise the language of hypothesis,
- use differing registers (code switching),
- use language for specific purposes (ESP),
- experience acculturation,
- practise speech acts of dominance and solidarity,

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[2] S Stern. *Drama in second language learning from a psycholinguistic perspective*. Language learning, 30 (1), 1980.

[3] Gavin Bolton. *Towards a theory of drama*. Hong Kong: Longman, 1979.

[4] *Ibid*

- combine 'thinking processes' with the appropriate notional language,
- explore a range of language functions.

Drama then is not performing plays, but rather a unique and powerful teaching tool which facilitates and deepens the learning process. Fully understood, its potential for second language teaching is enormous.

The unit

The dialogue in the Appendix was prepared by the authors. It provides practice in simple present and past tense as well as in the present and past continuous. Simply using it as practice dialogue would be useful in itself. However, it goes further than that, involving the learners in the following thinking processes:

- observing,
- describing,
- comparing,
- classifying,
- inferring conditions from effects,
- predicting effects of conditions,
- formulating hypotheses,
- generalising about cause and effect relationships,
- evaluating and deciding on course of action.

As well, it involves the learner in a wide variety of functional/notional language.

Observing, describing, *etc* are all language 'notions', meanings which can be expressed in a variety of ways and which have appeared in reference grammars organised by meaning as well as by structure. Teachers may explore the linguistic realisations of the thinking processes intuitively or, if they wish to **extend** this unit in a formalised way, they may key the 'notions' developed here to a reference grammar such as the *Communicative grammar of English*.[5]

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[5] Leech and Svartik. *A communicative grammar of English*. Longman, 1975, part 3.

APPENDIX

The dialogue

Person 1: Hey! You're walking on the grass.

Person 2: No, I'm not. I'm walking on the path.

Person 1: Yes, right now you're on the path, but a minute ago you were walking on the grass.

Person 2: I was not.

Witness 1: I saw you, you were walking on the grass, but when the policeman called to you, you jumped onto the path.

Person 2: I did not; you're lying.

Witness 2: Yes, you're lying. I was watching, and she was walking on the path all the time.

Witness 1: Don't you call me a liar. Do you think I'm blind? I tell you she was walking on the grass.

Witness 2: Yes, you're blind, and stupid too. She was walking on the path.

Person 1: Stop arguing. I'll take you all to the police station, and we'll settle this there.

Notes for the teacher	Procedures
Introductory questions help set the scene. By describing place and character, students become involved with characters.	Questions to be answered orally: What's happening here? Where are these people? Describe the place.
Developmentally, drawing precedes writing. Having students draw often helps them sort out their ideas and establish concepts.	Teacher can build up a chalkboard drawing as students present ideas, or students can draw the scene and then describe it to the teacher.
Students make inferences and begin to build characters.	What kind of person is 1? What kind of person is 2? What kind of person is witness 1? What kind of person is witness 2?
The importance of non-verbal signals in language is pointed out.	Point out that these people can be any kind of people the students want them to be, but their character will be revealed in their voice, mannerisms, *etc.* Demonstrate by reading the parts differently, and ask students to make assumptions about the kind of person you are portraying.
Initially working solo enables students to gain confidence and allows them time to develop some commitment to the role.	Solo work: Decide who you are, your age, occupation. Temperament — quick-tempered? easy going? placid? Physical characteristics — how do you walk? sit? do you limp? frown a lot? Home background — married? children? why are you in this place? where are you going? where have you just come from?
Look for student concentration and belief.	Think of the place you have just come from. Is it an office? cafe? home? What were you doing there?
Setting up the space helps the student build belief.	Set up a space so it is like the place you came from. Turn back the clock half an hour and do what you were doing in the half hour before you came here.
This preliminary group work allows students the opportunity to discuss the setting, share ideas, and finally make group decisions as to place and time.	Group work: Place: in your group decide exactly what the place is like. Where is the path? Where does the path go? What else is there? benches? trees? flower garden? Set up the place using chairs, *etc.* (Allow five minutes for this.) Time: What time of day is it? What time of year?

Notes for the teacher	Procedures
Teacher moves from group to group giving advice and help if necessary.	Students now practise the play. Teacher moves around the groups giving help if necessary. Things to look for: Are the characters clear? Do the students believe in their characters? Don't hesitate to stop the group and ask questions if the characters aren't clear. If the activity is not working, stop and ask the students to analyse what's going wrong.
An audience, with back to players, is useful when the players are inexperienced, or when stressing the language and the quality of voice and what it conveys. It can be done as well with students watching players.	Students perform the plays for each other. This can be done while the audience sits with backs to performers and then in small groups. Discuss what kind of people were being portrayed (inference just from voices).
Writing helps synthesise ideas.	The teacher divides groups into pairs and gives each pair a card that indicates a character, *eg* Witness 1. Together the students discuss the character and write a description of him or her. They can give the character a name, talk about physical appearance, temperament, *etc.*
Student-created dialogue can become the source for further work.	In groups, decide what happens at the police station. Improvise the scene, then have them write up their new dialogue which can then be acted out and shared.
Writing down ideas helps clarify points of view.	Have students write up individual reports of what happened from the point of view of the person they portrayed.
By playing an authority figure, the teacher is able to control the drama by asking questions that extend the students' thinking and language.	Advanced work: Problem-solving — The teacher takes on the role of judge. Put the students in the roles of police board members. Tell them they have been called together because of a serious accusation that has been made about one of their policemen. Tell them you have various reports on the matter. Distribute the reports and let them read them.

Notes for the teacher	Procedures
This is advanced work in that students need experience in simple role playing situations before they can enter into this kind of work with any sincerity.	Policeman's report: 'Last Thursday I accused a girl in the park of walking on the grass in an area where it is not allowed. She hopped onto the path when I called to her, and then she denied walking on the grass. Some witnesses began arguing about who was right, and I decided they should all accompany me to the police station where we could settle the matter. At the police station the girl still denied walking on the grass, and one of the witnesses, a teenage boy, supported her. She started crying and saying I had picked on her and she was innocent and she was going to see my superiors because I was lying about her.
The potential for drama lies in this section of the lesson. The group is confronted with an issue and must work together to find a solution.	'She demanded we call her mother and said she would 'get me for this'. The witness who had supported me at the park now said he 'didn't want to get involved' and he refused to be a witness for me. But I didn't lie, and I know this hearing will clear my name.' Girl's report: 'Last Thursday when I was walking in the park, this policeman yelled at me and accused me of walking on the grass. I wasn't walking on the grass, I was walking on the path, and I didn't do anything wrong. He was very rude to me, and in the car going to the station he threatened me and said I was too smart for my own good, and I should be home doing my homework, or helping my mother cook dinner instead of walking around the park. I think the guy is a little crazy. He really seems to hate teenagers. He frightened me. I don't think people like him should be allowed in the police force.'

Notes for the teacher	**Procedures**
The unit involves listening, speaking, reading, writing and drawing in an integrated fashion. It facilitates thinking and involves manipulating language, both spoken and written.	Let the children, in their roles as members of the police board, try to decide from the evidence who is lying. The teacher, as head of the board, must facilitate thinking by asking the group questions: Is this the first time the policeman has been accused of lying? Why doesn't he have the name and address of the witness he said supported him at first? Does this girl have a history of lying? How reliable is her witness?
The teacher, in the role of the judge, will use a more formal language mode, as will students role-playing being in a court. Thus students' language is extended. Students use a mode of language that goes beyond their everyday existence.	Also have some students role play the four people involved in the case before the police board. This should be done without preparation. The teacher, as judge, should simply ask 'Is the policeman present?' and then look around expectantly. A student will eventually volunteer and take the responsibility for answering questions in role. If the class is not experienced with this kind of work, you may want to give a student a role by addressing him directly, *eg* 'Well, Constable Jones, we've read your report, could I now ask you to come up front here while we ask you a few questions. Thank you.' Encourage the class to ask questions in order to ascertain the truth. As well as the people in the dialogue, additional witnesses could be called, *eg* the mother of the girl who was accused of walking on the grass. The teacher, as judge, must keep asking challenging questions of the board and witnesses, so that students continually grapple with thought and language together. After all evidence has been heard, the teacher asks the group to decide the verdict.

Notes for the teacher	Procedures
The class reflects on the experience of the lesson. Have they reached any deeper understanding? It is during this time of reflection that students synthesise their ideas and thus reach deeper levels of understanding. Thus the lesson has moved from a simple language drill to grappling with a problem, to new understanding. This type of drama pushes the students beyond their present levels of language use, thinking and comprehension.	The teacher comes out of role and asks the group to reflect on some of the problems raised by the subject matter of the lesson. Some questions that may come up are as follows: What can you do if no one believes you? How do you tell if someone is lying?

AWARENESS ACTIVITIES FOR TEACHING STRUCTURES

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What, for the purposes of this article, is an awareness exercise? The best answer is to ask you to come out of your reading mood and do an exercise:

Where do I fit?

Choose half a dozen collectives you belong to or to which you used to belong. They may be big groupings you are part of, or small and intimate ones. Use the box below and draw a shape for each of your six collectives. Represent the position you feel you have in each group/collective with a cross. In class you would be asked to explain your shapes to your neighbour. Since you can't do that in this context, turn to the end of the article where you can compare your collectives with mine.

Having looked at my collectives you may feel some curiosity to know more than the shapes and their captions told you, but in the context of this written page I don't feel like telling you anymore as I have no idea who you are and so there is not enough trust for me to go further than I have already gone. In fact you have had more pointers to what sort of person I may be than you would normally have had after reading the first page in most articles of this sort.

Where do I fit? is an awareness exercise in that initially it makes you think about yourself in a possibly new way. Yourself is usually the most interesting thing you can think about, so it's a good opening for the exercise. The instruction that you are to **draw** the collectives you belong to forces you to view them in a new light. In the final, communicative stage of the exercise, some of this introspection is communicated between group members, as they look at each other's shapes. You may find that you have much more to tell X in the group about your shapes than you want to tell me. In other words the amount of information communicated to each other by two group members will directly depend on the degree of trust existing between them.

Awareness exercises are icebergs in which what is said is the visible tip of the vast number of things very rapidly thought and felt. in this way awareness exercises are much nearer full, effective communication between human beings than many of the rather shallow 'information gap' exercises that seem fairly central to certain types of 'communicative' language teaching.[1]

One of the snags with the exercise looked at above is that many teachers would classify it as a 'free discussion activity' and many of them don't ever have a slot for this in their teaching timetables. They will ask 'what is the aim of the exercise, what is it teaching?' If you simply answer that it allows the learners to find out more about themselves and each other through the medium of the target language, and that in the process of doing this they change and deepen their unconscious rapport with the language, most teachers round the world will not understand what you mean. They want to know that they are teaching something concrete, and about the most concrete thing teachers reckon they can teach is grammar. This why we have thought it wise to adapt the awareness exercise to the teaching of grammar.

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[1] Plenty of examples of 'information gap' activities are given by Johnson and Morrow in *Communication in the classroom* (Longman, 1981) and by W Littlewood in *Communicative language teaching* (CUP, 1981).

A digression is in order here on the 'selling' of humanistic techniques to colleagues who do not yet know them. My feeling is that many of the humanistic language teaching approaches do themselves a disservice by appearing to the non-initiate teacher as fierce, closed and self-sufficient systems. This kind of sales pitch produces converts among a minority, a very small minority, of teachers who, for reasons of their own, are looking for a sudden change of professional direction. The majority, though, are put off by the implication that they have been wasting their time until they met up with Approach X. In presenting themselves thus the humanistic language approaches ignore a normal principle of teaching, that you should start off where the learners are at, and that learning is a gradual adjustment not a 'Saul on the road to Damascus' affair.

When teachers are presented with awareness exercises as aids to grammar teaching they regard them as central and serious and they know where to include them in their programmes. What actually happens once they begin to use such exercises regularly in class is that they begin to realise that the exercise is doing much beyond its stated aim: practising this or that bit of grammar. They notice that such exercises begin to change the way people relate to each other. They are drawn into thinking about the students in a humanistic way, but they come to this realisation gradually and in their own time. The awareness exercises, infiltrated into the frame of their normal textbook teaching, gently bring some teachers to wonder why the textbooks they have been working with are so boring and dead. And so a quiet, personalised revolution is begun within the teacher.

So far, in the development of awareness activities for teaching structures, we have found they fit in to a number of exercise types, some of which are outlined and exemplified below.

Role reversal

In these exercises Student A projects him/herself into the skin of Student B and writes some patterned sentences as Student B. In a subsequent oral phase Student A makes his/her projections public and B confirms or disconfirms them. The exercise frame can be used for working on many different structures, but let me give you an example:

Present simple + adverbs of frequency

Step 1: The teacher splits the class up into sub-groups of six to eight students.

Step 2: The students write their names on slips of paper which a leader in each group takes in and shuffles. The slips of paper have been folded over. Each student then picks a random name from the shuffled pile. Nobody must take his/her own name.

Step 3: The teacher puts up the following on the board or OHP:

I always . . . .
I
I
I
I
I
I never . . . .

The teacher then elicits from the group the cline of adverbs **always** and **never**.

Step 4: Each student imagines he/she is the person whose name he/she has picked. The task is to write seven sentences as the other learner, in the first person, about their habits and using each of the patterns given above.

Step 5: The sub-groups work simultaneously and autonomously. In each group Student A reads out his/her first sentence as B. B then confirms or disconfirms the projection. At this stage students often begin discussing freely, using some of the patterns given.

To return for a moment to what I said earlier about not knocking the average teacher's preconceptions too hard, too soon. In the above exercise the Skinner-dominated teacher, who believes that students learn by repetition, can count nearly fifty occurrences of the target pattern in each group of eight students, as they read out what they have written. When you add the disconfirmations the pattern may be used as many as eighty times. If such a teacher is observant he/she will also come to notice that many other things are happening besides, such as real eye contact between students, laughter, embarrassment, arguments *etc*, all of which put the exercise a million light years from the morgue-like drills of much Skinnerian practice. Such an exercise can act as a slow fused time-bomb within the teacher's preception of what he/she is doing and what he/she might be doing.

Insistence exercises

Student A tirelessly repeats the same question and Student B tries to find as many varied answers to the question as he/she can. To give you the flavour of this exercise type, here is a transcript of a dialogue between two post-beginner adult students:

Juan: Who are you?
Margarita: I'm Margarita.

J: Who are you?
M: Margarita Senar.
J: Who are you?
M: I'm a mother.
J: Who are you?
M: I'm a pinter . . . . no, a painter.
J: Who are you?
M: I'm a Espanish woman.
J: Who are you?
M: I'm wife.
J: Who are you?
M: I'm housewife.
J: Who are you?
M: I'm gardener. (Teacher: a) I'm a gardener.
J: Who are you?
M: I'm daughter, a daughter.
J: Who are you?
M: I'm a student of English.
J: Who are you?
M: I'm me!

In the above dialogue the real learning lies in M's replies, where she grapples with the problem of putting in the indefinite article where she would leave it out in her mother tongue.

Given questions provoke foreseeable grammar areas in the responses. So 'where do you live?' gets students using spatial prepositions in their answers. 'What'll you've done by 1990?', besides giving the questioner practice in getting the contractions right, often evokes a need in the answerer for structures like:

I'll've . . .
I won't've
I may've
Perhaps I'll've
} + past participle

While the teacher feels secure in 'knowing' that he/she is teaching/using such and such an exercise, and in 'knowing' where to fit it into the progression of whatever textbook is being used, the students are free to go on finding out about each other, and often in areas they would not normally explore in class. This modifies their attitude towards the language and begins to make it feel at least half real.

Memory exercises

These provide a frame for the student to bring things back to mind from his/her own past and share these with the group. For example:

Past simple/past continuous

Step 1: The teacher splits the class up into sub-groups of six or so students.

Step 2: Everybody is asked to jot down an important personal date in the past two years. They must write down precise dates.

Step 3: The sub-groups work simultaneously and autonomously. Student A tells the others his/her date, which they write down, and then explains what happened on that date. Student A usually uses the past simple to do this. Each other student then says 'on the xth of the y of 1980 I was . . . . . ing.'

This particular exercise usually creates a lot of warmth in the sub-groups as people realise how separate they are and yet how together. The design of the exercise gives the teacher a large degree of control over what patterns will need to be used but leaves the students complete control of what they want to say. Whether they will be willing to talk to the group about really important things will depend on how they feel towards the other members. Sometimes they feel they can say very private things: I remember an eighteen-year-old saying, referring to that same year, 'on the 19th of March I became my boyfriend's girlfriend'. People can choose the depth to which they want to go in a given group; censorship can, does and must operate in this kind of exercise. If self-censorship did not operate naturally, such exercises would be dynamite.

Here is a second example of a memory exercise:

'Third' conditional

Step 1: The teacher tells a 'near miss' story of his/her own. In my own case I tell students about the time my wife took our son, who was then a bit under two, to the Cherry Hinton Road. She parked the car and went into the chemist's. Martin began to open the door on her side — he had never done this before and she didn't realise he could. A large truck happened to be coming down the road, well within the speed limit. Martin managed to get down onto the road and the truck ran over the toe of his tiny bootee — **had the child been a couple of centimetres nearer that giant wheel, he'd've been smashed to death.**

Step 2: The teacher invites the students to silently recall 'near misses' that have happened to them or to their near ones. Usually more than half the group have stories to tell. The teacher pairs off story-tellers with listeners, asking each teller to finish his/her story with a 'third' conditional punchline.

Step 3: The pairs change and the **listeners** tell the stories they have heard to a new partner and, after the telling, they go and write their punchline up on the board. Two or three of the people who have written up the most intriguing punchlines, tell the stories they have heard to the whole group.

While adults tend to do this exercise in a sad key, at secondary level it can give rise to hilarious accounts of sexual 'near misses'! A word needs to be said here about elicitation of sad or painful human material in the language class. The message you get from every page of Gertrude Moskowitz's excellent book, *Caring and sharing in the foreign language classroom* (Newbury House, 1976) is 'accentuate the positive'. The problem with this is that you don't know what will be positive or negative for a given individual. The other problem is that you run the risk of turning your language classroom into a syrupy bath of insincere positivism. If people are speaking for real, they will sometimes say nasty things to each other and that is one of the prices you have to pay for avoiding triviality and courting depth.

Majority opinion exercise

The activities we have looked at so far require the individual to focus on him/herself, on one other member of the group, or on several people one after the other. The key to the exercise below is focus on the group as a whole:

Determiners

Step 1: The teacher writes up on the board:

All of us		green is our favourite colour
....		capitalism is a good force
....	feel	sex before marriage is wrong
....	feels	....
....		....
None of us		....

The teacher then elicits from the group the missing phrases to fill up the cline on the left and three more opinion sentences to go on the right.

Step 2: Working silently the students then choose which is the correct subject for each of the six sentences on the right; they write these down.

Step 3: The teacher invites half a dozen students to read out their sentence about **green**. The teacher asks people who actually do have green as their favourite colour to put their hands up. In this way individuals can check out if their projection of the group opinion was right or wrong.

Apart from practising a given structure this exercise type brings learners to reflect on their place in the group. It can also be used as a starter to free discussion.

Does the gradualistic introduction of teachers to humanistic techniques actually work?

The answer to this is definitely 'yes' on the scale of the individual trainee. Recent developments suggest that it may well work on a wider scale: a Belgian trainer who came to us at Pilgrims and learned about awareness exercises for teaching structures, then started teaching them to his trainees. One of his students wrote a series of such exercises to complement a new Belgian secondary school textbook. The writers of the book now want to have her exercises published as a workbook to be marketed with the textbook. This would ensure the spread of these ideas round the Belgian secondary school system.

Some doubts

So far we have used awareness exercises mainly if not exclusively with European students. I have no idea how they would work in the Far East, in Africa or in Arab countries. Are the ones included in this article and those we have put out in *Awareness activities*[2] too culture-loaded to work smoothly in these other parts of the world? Would the teachers refuse to try them on precisely these grounds? Since you may well be reading this in one of the non-European parts of the world, may I ask you to come back to me on this one? In your teaching situation, would you simply have no use for them, or would you need to adapt them in specific ways? Please write to me c/o Pilgrims, 8 Vernon Place, Canterbury, Kent CT1 3YG, UK.

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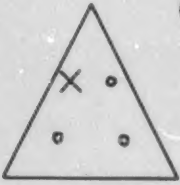
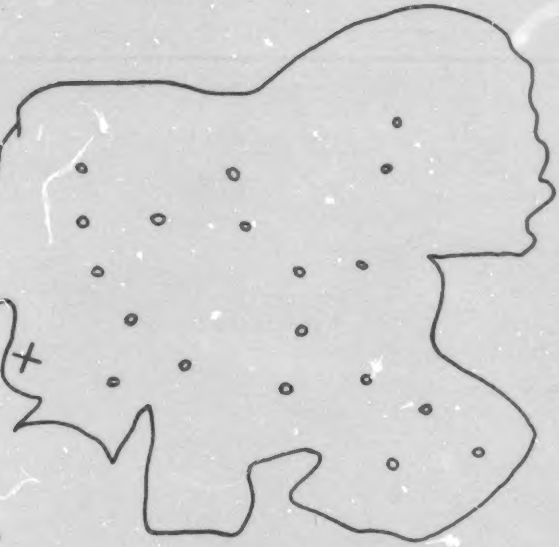
[2] C Frank and M Rinvolucri. *Awareness activities*. Canterbury: Pilgrims Publications, 1976.

APPENDIX

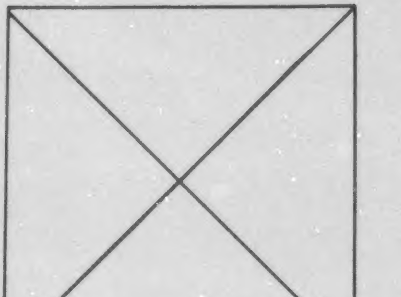
Where do I fit?



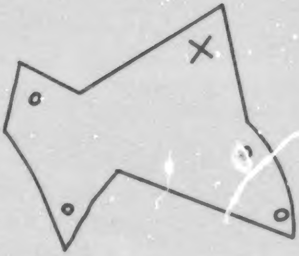
My family



The Labour Party



Pilgrims, my
present workplace



A sub-group in the English
Dept in the University of
Valdivia, 1971–73

A HUMANISTIC PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Jennybelle Rardin, Counseling-Learning Institutes, East Dubuque, Ill., USA

A teacher who recently attended a teacher training programme which I was conducting assured me enthusiastically before classes began that he was looking forward to this 'hot-tub' experience in language learning. This was the first time I had heard that expression. I found it intriguing and amusing to say the least. At the end of the first day, however, he came back to me saying that the experience had not been at all what he expected from such a 'humanistic' approach to education. In fact, he did not know quite what to call it yet.

This kind of current jargon seems related to earlier attacks by educators on humanistic approaches and innovative education. In the early seventies an article in the *New York Times* cited study after study proving that all that these innovative, whole-person, student-centred methods had yielded, according to standardised reading tests, were more students reading at lower scores or not at all. The central theme of the article was 'back to the basics'. The meaning of that phrase seemed to me to be 'let's get back to the basic curriculum of reading, writing, and 'rithmetic'. At least when we were teaching that core, students were learning to read, write, add and subtract. Methods to teach those subjects seemed to work, so why keep trying these new 'soft' approaches which don't work. What we really need is more disciplined education and study, according to that article.

I strongly agree with this last statement and think we need to take another look at 'discipline' especially as Curran grappled with it in his research.

Discipline: a shift in focus

Curran[1] begins:

> For various reasons many attempts to arrive at different learning motivations and methods have been described as 'permissive' . . . According to this misinterpretation 'permissive' methods were considered 'soft' and, in a way, debilitating. Real character was developed only by making learning 'tough'. Given this premise, even the spontaneous enjoyment of learning was somehow suspect . . .

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[1] Charles A Curran. *Counseling-learning: a whole-person model for education.* New York: Grune and Stratton, 1972, p. 22.

But he went on to change the focus from an external discipline to an internal one:

> In its Latin context, *disciplina* was not only what was learned, but the whole personal learning experience itself. It implied an internalisation of what was learned and the self-control necessary to bring about fruition in the person himself. This is quite different from an external conformity to the teacher's ideas, or an ability to reproduce knowledge when demanded by competition and testing.

In a review of his book *Counseling and psychotherapy: the pursuit of values*, Arnold makes the following comment:[2]

> This (research in counseling and learning) is a giant step beyond the original practice of non-directive counseling that turned every learning situation into a counseling situation and thus aroused a great deal of resentment among students who came to seek information about a particular area and instead were forced to participate in a group catharsis.

Part of what I feel prevailed during the implementation, in the sixties and seventies, of humanistic education was a confusion about the necessary and mutually supportive and constructive relationship between limits/disciplines and the growth/change process.

A counselling-learning approach

Before going any further, I want briefly to explain the frame of reference or teaching-learning philosophy which I hold. It is a counselling-learning/community (language) learning (C-L/CLL) one, developed by the late Charles A Curran of Loyola University of Chicago and his associates. I am certainly not unbiased in presenting this particular point of view since I am also a product of it. A brief statement of my participation was reported elsewhere[3] but for the purpose of this article let me say that I have been involved in many different phases of this research for the past twenty-two years.

A cornerstone of this approach, as it revealed itself repeatedly in the various research classes, is that at a certain point in the adult learning process, primitive ego-defence patterns take over and block further learning. These ego-defensive reactions showed themselves to be quite subtle in adult learners. In other words, changing one's behaviours and reactions to specific learning experiences seemed to involve a complex personal engagement between the knower and learner, as well as between learner and learners, all related to the learning task.

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[2] Magda B Arnold. *Review of 'Counseling and psychotherapy: the pursuit of values'* Religious education, **64** (5), Sept-Oct 1969, p. 415.

[3] Jennybelle Rardin. *The language teacher as facilitator.* Tesol quarterly, **11** (4), December 1977, p. 384.

Therefore, as a result of these repeated findings, language experts (the original research involved the learning of four languages simultaneously) were given the opportunity to learn counselling skills and awarenesses in order to create as non-defensive and co-operative a learning environment and relationship as was possible for adults. So, while the original research did not set out to develop a method of teaching languages, it did in fact, over the years, develop various methods and techniques for encouraging communicative competence and linguistic proficiency. The original research was designed to explore the psychological subtleties of adult learning in a counselling relationship. More recently this approach has been introduced to adult basic education teachers, resulting in additional methods and techniques for teaching reading, writing, maths and basic literacy skills.

Approach, method and technique

I should also comment here, that when I refer to 'approach', 'method', and 'technique', I do so following Edward Anthony's understanding of these concepts as quoted by Light:[4]

> 'Approach', he suggests, is axiomatic, representing a set of beliefs about the nature of learning and the nature of language. Approach states a point of view, a philosophy — something which one believes but cannot necessarily prove . . . 'Method' is procedural and it is consistent with an approach; it is an overall plan of teaching that is based on a selected approach . . . A 'technique' is implementational and is consistent with method. It is what actually takes place in the classroom in terms of actions and technologies to accomplish immediate objectives.

As an approach, the following statements can be made about the human learning process and the elements necessary to positive and consistent learning as seen in counselling-learning:

> All final human learning is value learning.
>
> Resistance is inherent in any adult learning situation.
>
> Human learning is whole-person learning.
>
> Human learning is people.
>
> Human learning moves through a five-stage process of internalisation.

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[4] Richard Light. *A note on teaching and making sense.* Tesol newsletter, **XIII** (6), December 1979, p. 27.

> Six interrelated elements — security, attention, aggression, reflection, retention and discrimination — seem essential to human learning.

These statements have been elaborated by Curran and others in various publications. (See **Bibliography**.)

Perception of learners and the learning process

Now having said all the previous things by way of an introduction, what does it mean to call myself a humanistic educator? It means that I respect an inner capacity — an integrating principle — in each learner to gain insights and make choices appropriate to his/her own learning process. Interwoven with this respect is an appreciation of the uniqueness of each learner. I constantly work against the notion that I have a 'group' in front of me. I have, in fact, twenty-five or thirty individuals in class, each of whom will be relating to the learning process and tasks in his/her own ways. As a teacher I find myself becoming more creative as I understand and respond to the unique ways in which learners perceive particular learning experiences.

I have to trust in an inner developmental process that is taking place within each learner even though I do not have immediate evidence that what I want to see happening is happening in exactly the way I would like. This particular approach has been referred to as an agrarian, a seed-soil, creativity model which requires a germination period. The following is an example of this inner growth process which can be reported only by the one doing the learning. I, however, as the teacher have to trust it and place value on it, or it can be interpreted as if nothing has happened. The following comments are taken from one student participating in an intensive nine-hour Japanese weekend:

After three hours:	'I found this very enlightening and very enjoyable and even though I don't feel that I know anything at this point, I feel that it is all right that I don't know anything.'
After six hours:	'I have always wanted to speak Japanese and I never could or I've never thought that I would be able to do so. I've kind of given up but I'm feeling now that I can study it and that maybe I can learn it. I'm going to try. I've never thought that if I tried I could even do it before.'
After nine hours:	'I think we've learned an awful lot today, at least I have. Even though I feel it is on the surface, I'm going to be dreaming in Japanese. I may not know what I'm doing but I may be dreaming in Japanese.'

If the only criterion for learning is the visible, external evidence, like remembering so many words or phrases after a specified number of hours of instruction, then the inner process that is the foundation of that external growth will be by-passed. The above comments are valid statements about an inner motivational process that will directly affect further learning. It is precisely this feeling of inner capability, achievement and desire to try that will help learners be self-directed and self-motivated — one of the outcomes we are looking for as a result of our teaching efforts.

The teacher-learner relationship

Before I begin teaching anything, I must make an attempt, no matter how inadequate or simplistic it may seem, to begin to get to know who my students are and what their expectations are for the learning experience. While simply asking learners to introduce themselves and share what their expectations are for the class may seem obvious, it seems to be one of the most frequently missed exchanges. This kind of introduction seems to give both learner and teacher an opportunity to let each other know why they have come. I find that after even rather brief introductions, subsequent classroom activities encourage community experiences and, out of those, people have further opportunities to get to know one another.

Perception of learning environment

In terms of the learning environment, a non-defensive one seems to bring about learning different in quality from that of defensive learning, especially with adults. So I try to be as non-judgemental as possible about each learner. Let me quickly say, however, that this does not mean that I also do not make judgements about classroom management, limits regarding specific learning tasks, or the correctness of the language, for example. This 'unconditional positive regard' is for the learner as a person and responsible human being but it does not mean that I turn the entire responsibility for the learning experience over to the learners.

It is hoped in this accepting atmosphere that learners may feel as free as possible to come to the learning experience just as they are without their defences. In this way they may get to know themselves as learning selves, opening up the possibility for growth in new learning strategies. If, on the other hand, while being asked to become personally involved in the learning process, they also must defend themselves, there is a loss of wholeness in the process.

Teacher and learner vulnerability

In any humanistic approach to education both teacher and learner are vulnerable. As the teacher I am conscientiously disciplining the use of my own knowledge so that learners may have a different kind of learning experience. I need to at least feel and see some engagement on the part of students in the area of knowledge I am teaching. A specific example of just the reverse of this comes to mind. This happened in a training programme some years ago. At the end of several days of rather intense work with a group of teachers, one of them came up to me at the end of the day and said: 'This method is great. The teacher doesn't do anything; the student does all the work and that's the way it should be.' I didn't know whether to laugh, cry or get angry. What I most likely had said was: 'It may look like the teacher is not doing much, especially in the first three stages, but in fact (s)he is doing a great deal in terms of structuring, setting limits, thereby creating security and not overteaching.'

For the learner, whenever (s)he puts him/herself into the learning experience, there is always the risk of failure. While we all know that one learns through one's mistakes, simply 'knowing' this does not automatically take away the sting. A self-invested learner in the first three stages can be on the edge of discouragement and tempted toward withdrawal, aggression or indifference. Any of these extremes usually breaks communication and/or blocks the learning process.

Summary

So what does the foregoing have to do with 'hot-tub', 'soft', 'lack-of-discipline' interpretations of humanistic approaches to education? When I heard these descriptions I used to ask myself, why is it then that I feel so exhausted, drained and even empty after some of my classes, if this kind of teaching is so easy? I have always been consoled by Montaigne's comment in his essay *On the education of children*:[5]

> At the very outset he [the teacher] should put the pupil on his own mettle. Let him taste things for himself, and choose and determine between them . . . this is one of the hardest things I know of. Only the most disciplined and finely tempered souls know how to slacken and stoop to the gait of children. I walk firmer and surer uphill than down . . .

While Montaigne speaks about the education of children and the philosophy of education, and what I have been writing about here addresses an adult learning process, the two are related because they both refer to a non-defensive openness to, and engagement in, the learning process. How is this non-defensive engagement possible, especially for adults? The self-discipline on the part of the teacher can encourage this kind of openness to learning and create the conditions whereby a learner can experience an inner motivational process.

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[5] Included in Michel de Montaigne: *Essays*. Penguin, 1958.

Let's take just one technique that is characteristic of C-L/CLL experiences: the way in which the teacher gives the learner the target language especially in Stage I. Stages I, II, III are seen as 'entry' experiences, while Stages IV and V are seen as refining experiences. If you were to observe a beginning C-L/CLL experience in French, for example, you would see the learners seated in a circle and the teacher outside the circle. At the point someone wanted to begin the conversation, (s)he would raise a hand, finger, or give some indication of wanting to say something and the teacher-counsellor would go behind that learner. The learner would say in the common language what (s)he wanted to say and to whom, and the teacher-counsellor would give it back a word at a time or phrase by phrase in the target language. The learner would then restate it to whomever was being addressed in the circle. The teacher-counsellor would not, however, give the entire sentence in the target language. Why this technique? Why is the teacher holding back and in that sense disciplining him/herself in the normal flow of his/her knowledge? Why is the teacher 'distorting' the target language? Why is the teacher being so 'artificial'?

What seemed to recur for many language learners in the research phases of this process was an inner, instinctive, panic reaction at hearing entire sentences which they then had to reproduce. This inner reaction seemed to tighten them and cause either forgetting or mispronunciation of the target language. As the research students explored their feelings of panic at not being able to hear the sounds, the language counsellors subsequently became more sensitive to manageable bite sizes. Anxiety decreased and learners felt themselves enter the target language. As I mentioned earlier, this is only one technique out of many which emerged as a response to the inherent resistance in any adult learning situation — the approach statement made earlier in this article. In relating this technique back to the approach statement, I am attempting to show the inner consistency between what a teacher does in the classroom and why the teacher does it. It seems the longer teachers work with this particular approach, the more of these connections between technique and approach are made.

As one of the adult basic education teachers put it after a year and a half of working with the model: 'I really feel that I am understanding this whole approach at a deeper level.' I asked him to clarify for me what he meant by the word 'deeper'. And he went on to say: 'It's like understanding the reasons why certain things are done in relationship to the learners or in designing activities. For a long time I thought what the teachers did was more or less arbitrary but what I can see now are the connections.'

Just as language learners come to recognise upon reflection, the reasonable substructure embedded in the spontaneous flow of their conversations, so teachers attempting to internalise any particular approach to teaching seem to arrive at operational connections between abstract theoretical statements and concrete experience. Curran refers to this process for language learners in the following:[6]

> What emerged was the realisation that, while life, in terms of a foreign language communication, is spontaneous, free, personal and intense and so is emotional and somatic as well as intellectual and voluntary, it is not without some internal form or order. Upon abstraction and reflection, one grows to see this internal form and order as being basically necessary for adequate communication and understanding. In this sense rules of grammar and vocabulary, while dead structures that need to be brought alive when they have been memorised or learned, were, in these experiences, first contained in their spontaneous expressions. Somewhat as people may be surprised in the study of anatomy to discover that the skeletal structures are contained in the living people that they know and love, so our students were surprised and excited to see that grammar and vocabulary were really alive and basic to the rich, warm communications they were having with one another in the foreign language.

In a recent article Orem addresses a pressing issue in teacher training programmes:[7]

> We may be very good in training teachers in the use of specific techniques, gadgets, in a cookbook approach to the classroom, but we have been very lax in developing a cadre of teachers who know why they do what they do, and who have bothered to develop a philosophy of language teaching . . . Teachers too often lack a basic philosophy of language teaching which can provide them with a general framework within which to design their daily activities.

Montaigne, too, had some advice regarding the selection of a teacher for the pupils under discussion in his *Essays*:[8]

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[6] Charles A Curran. *Counseling-learning in second languages*. Apple River, Ill.: Apple River Press, 1976, p. 17.

[7] Richard Orem. *Entering the 80s: some professional perspectives*. Tesol newsleter, **XV** (2), April 1981, pp. 3-4.

[8] Michel de Montaigne. *Op cit.*, p. 54.

> I should wish great care to be taken in the selection of a guide with a well-formed rather than a well-filled intellect. One should look for a man who has both . . . and should require him to fulfil his functions in a new way.

Now what does all this have to do with 'discipline?' In order for a learner to be enabled to enter a specific area of knowledge and thereby experience this inner motivational process referred to earlier, the teacher needs to be self-disciplined in the use of his/her knowledge. As learners get into the content area, further learning experiences provide the additional information, the additional raw data that must be integrated if learning continues. But only the learner can do the integrating and ordering of what at first can seem to be total linguistic chaos. In that integrating process, however, if the learner is sensitively and respectfully supported by a teacher, self-directed learning seems to take place.

Being sensitive to another's unique learning process costs patience and energy in holding back one's quick judgements and in holding open to hearing how a learner perceives and experiences him/herself in the learning process. But the way I see it, it is one way that I can give something beyond the knowledge that a student has come for. I can give to another human being that respect for his/her uniqueness, separateness and freedom to make choices related to the learning process. It is a gift that I feel is at the heart of a humanistic philosophy of education. For sure it is not an end product that can be measured or quantified but it is essential if education is to be genuinely holistic. If in some way both quantitative and qualitative outcomes can be assessed and reported and equally valued, then we will come closer to the goals of humanistic education.

INTERVIEWING IN THE GROUP LIFE OF COMMUNITY LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Group life consists of a flow of fairly predictable events which involve the individual in the learning process. Group life has been described by Beck[1] in nine phases of structure in therapy and encounter groups. Group life is focused intensively on individual learning throughout all the phases of development. The group is formed by the participants during the first three phases: first, in its contract and agreement to work as a group, second, in the establishment of a group identity and direction, and third, in the exploration by the group of each individual member. Individual learning and awareness advance rapidly during the next three stages. Intimacy is established during stage four. Mutual goals and values are explored during stage five. The individual achieves greater autonomy when the group structure is reorganised at stage six. A redefinition of the roles of the participants and the group leader greatly enhances the learning progress of the individual. As will be shown later, this change of roles is crucial to learning. The last three phases refer to the termination of the group process, namely, the achievement of independence (stage seven), the transfer of learning (stage eight), and the termination of the group with separation from significant individuals (stage nine).

The purpose of this article is to show how group life significantly influences individual learning. The foreign language teacher has control over the events which occur in the classroom. Greater attention to the succession of events or activities will provide a more effective learning environment for each student. The purpose of the group activity is to give the participants the opportunity to use what they know in order to achieve understanding of themselves and others in the interview situation. The point of view adopted here is from the work on counselling-learning/community language learning by the late Charles A Curran.[2] The responsibility of the community language learning (CLL) teacher is to monitor the flow of events in the classroom in such a way that the individual is not overwhelmed. Significant personal development occurs when the individual learns through and with others. Curran[3] has written 'learning is persons'. In spite of the learner-centred aspects of this dictum, the most significant person in the group is still the teacher-counsellor. Group life, in the final analysis, is subject to teacher responsibility and control.

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[1] A P Beck. *Phases in the development of structure in therapy and encounter groups*. In David A Wexler and Laura N Rice. Innovations in client-centered therapy. New York: Wiley, 1974.

[2] C A Curran. *Counseling-learning: a whole-person model for education*. New York: Grune & Stratton, 1972; *Counseling-learning in second languages*. Apple River, Illinois: Apple River Press, 1976; *Understanding: a necessary ingredient in human belonging*. Apple River, Illinois: Apple River Press, 1978.

These counselling-learning (C-L) themes will be exemplified in three ways. First, the skill to be employed is English conversation, as opposed to writing or grammatical skills. The Japanese have been notorious for their inability to speak English or other foreign languages. Second, the group life is called CLL. Stevick[4] has made a useful distinction between classical CLL and CLL in general. In my opinion, classical CLL is applicable in Japan to English education at the elementary level in junior high school. Classical CLL can also be used with foreign languages other than English (German, French, Spanish, and so on) at all educational levels. A counselling approach with classical CLL is a maturational growth process. The rudiments of the foreign language grow like a seed which develops into the roots, stem, and finally into a mature flowering plant. But for senior high school, university, and adult level English education, a long tradition of teaching English through memorising, reading, and translation has been established in Japan.

In my opinion, the 'overhear'[5] associated with classical CLL is no longer necessary. Still, a counselling approach can be highly beneficial in cultivating and developing English speaking skills. A counselling approach with accommodated CLL is an integrative growth process. Japanese students of English learn to employ the analytic structures they have memorised to satisfy their effective needs in the immediate social situation. Once they have acquired the skill of handling the demands of the social situation, the grammatical structures of English are recalled rather rapidly and are used correctly. Accommodated CLL is highly effective because interpersonal learning mechanisms characteristic of Japanese society fit readily into CLL group life.

Third, the C-L/CLL themes introduced previously will be extended to include a sociolinguistic viewpoint. If the interpersonal learning mechanisms characteristic of a society, commonly called 'culture learning mechanisms', can be introduced into the educational structure of the classroom together with a pertinent pedagogy, the learning effectiveness will be greatly enhanced. An example of a culture learning mechanism in the Japanese case is the 'interview'. The interview is a highly flexible interpersonal phenomenon which is employed when a crisis arises during the life of a Japanese group. The public life of the group is interrupted for a time. A series of private meetings in pairs or small groups is held between the leaders and among the different factions of the same group. These meetings take on the interpersonal configuration of an informal interview. They are held in a flexible way in pairs, small groups, and in larger meetings of representatives from differing factions of the same group. The timing of these small meetings or interviews is considered very sensitive; otherwise, the highly charged emotional atmosphere might lead to a permanent rupture of the group unity. The purpose of the small private meetings is to dispel unfounded rumours and suspicions, to promote mutual understanding, and to redefine the roles of all the leaders and participants. When the confidence of the members has risen to the point where a fresh and unanimous consensus is possible, the public life of the group is celebrated with elaborate ceremony. When a problem arises in the ruling Liberal-Democratic party, for instance, the public sessions of the Japanese Diet are suspended or greatly downgraded for a time. The leaders of the major political factions within the party begin to confer with each other in pairs or small group interviews. The mass media (newspapers, television, radio) focus on these small gatherings with fanatic intensity. The number of small private meetings on an informal scale is multiplied until a consensus is reached in the party. Then the Diet is reconvened with elaborate public ceremony.

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[3] C A Curran. *Op cit.*, 1972, p. 23.

[4] E Stevick. *Teaching languages: a way and ways.* Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1980, p. 114.

[5] A more detailed explanation can be found in Curran. *Op cit.*, 1972, p. 130.

During the interview, many listening, observing and questioning skills are employed in order to promote mutual understanding. These same skills, if applied within the group life of a foreign language learning class, can be a very powerful force for individual learning. The nature of CLL group life will be explained below. This explanation will include difficulties commonly met when one employs CLL in the classroom. Specific exercises for each CLL stage will then be described, and some of the results summarised. The nature of the interview as it occurs in the group life of CLL will, it is hoped, provide hints which other teachers may find useful for classroom activities.

Some problems with short-term counselling

The purpose of this section is to provide an explanation of CLL. CLL is not being presented as a panacea for all the problems of language learning. Each element of CLL contains a problem which calls for a creative struggle by the CLL teacher. Later, I hope to show how these problems with short-term counselling can be handled in the cultural context of the Japanese interview. CLL is a **supportive language learning contract** which consists of **group experience** and **group reflection**. There are five important elements to this definition:

CLL is group experience

CLL is a supportive contract

CLL is group reflection

CLL is a learning contract

CLL is language learning

First, CLL is **group experience**. According to Curran,[6] students do not learn alone, but together with others in groups. The CLL class takes on three basic configurations: first, the entire class group or larger units composed of ten or fifteen students, second, small groups composed of five or six students, third, pair or triad groups. There are difficulties with each of these configurations which point to a basic problem with short-term counselling. In short-term counselling, the teacher explains the purpose of the activity and sets a time limit. The teacher awaits the reaction of the students before proceeding further. As applied to a speaking experience with the large group configuration, the teacher is faced with a dilemma. So much anxiety is generated by the presence of the teacher that the students never really function adequately in the foreign language. On the other hand, the presence of the teacher is necessary for learning to occur. The small group configuration provides a more relaxed learning environment when the teacher does not participate. However, the students are apt to relax to such an extent that they use their native language in place of the foreign language. Pair and triad groups give the individual a chance to broaden relationships inside the class. However, the intensive experience of speaking the foreign language can also become physically fatiguing. In order to face all these problems squarely, the CLL teacher must use all three configurations in a flexible but not permissive way, which will be shown later.

Second, CLL is **supportive learning**. In contrast to 'teacher-centred' forms of language learning based on textbooks and lengthy grammatical explanation by the teacher, CLL is 'student-centred'. This means that the teacher maintains silence in the group and allows the learning to be shared by the students themselves. Students, however, find very great difficulty in functioning without some kind of well-defined social structure and purpose. The lack of structure implied by the terms 'student-centred' and 'short-term counselling' may be excuses for lack of action by the teacher in presenting supportive structure for the students. The social structure of the interview greatly eases this difficulty, as will be shown later.

Third, CLL is **group reflection**. A reflection period follows each CLL group experience. The CLL reflection period, if properly employed, can become an effective force for learning. In accommodated CLL, it consists of two parts: a period of silent evaluation by each participant, and a period of sharing or reporting. During the silent period, a short report is prepared in writing. The reports are then shared with the whole group. The problem here is boredom. Some variety must be introduced into this format; otherwise students will become bored with reflection as with any other repetitious exercise.

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[6] C A Curran. *Op cit.*, 1972, p. 12.

Fourth, CLL is a **learning contract**. A contract, as described by Beck,[7] is a mutual agreement to participate in a process with a particular set of people. The initial task of a CLL group is to become more than a collection of individuals, to become, indeed, a community. 'Community' as opposed to 'group' is formed by an agreement to work together with others (interpersonal process) toward a goal (for example, the mastery of a foreign language). Evaluation of the goals through reflection is part of the interpersonal process. The problem here is a lack of focus on the skills necessary for communicating in the foreign language. The CLL group may become so focused on 'process' that the 'content' goals become dim. Content, as used here, refers to grammatical skills necessary for speaking in the foreign language. The contracts have to contain a definition clear enough that the content goals can be readily grasped by the students.

Fifth, CLL is **language learning**. According to Curran,[8] the learner grows into the new language like a living person. There is birth and childhood (Stages I & II), adolescence (Stages III & IV), and finally adulthood (Stage V). The problem facing the teacher arises from individual differences among the students. Some students may show evidence of ability at Stages I or II, whereas others may be more advanced at Stages IV and V. These cases appear frequently among Japanese junior college students. Female students (age 19–20) who have travelled to the United States or who have developed speaking ability through hard work and superior motivation are thrown into the same class with those less gifted by the experience of travel abroad or less active motivation.

As will be shown later, the interview provides a social format where these individual differences are bridged. In a sense, the life of the CLL group reflects each stage of individual learning. The CLL group is formed in Stage I, the Embryonic Stage, through the establishment of the contract. Its identity and direction toward the skills necessary for communication are established in Stage II, the Self-Assertion Stage. During Stage III, the Separate Existence Stage, the tasks outlined by Beck take place in the exploration of each individual by another. Intimacy, friendship, and mutual trust are established among the students during this adolescent period in the group life. An adolescent crisis occurs at the end of Stage III when the definitions made by the group tend to exclude the teacher. This crisis is resolved by a redefinition of the roles of all the participants, both the teacher and the students. Stage IV is the Reversal Stage. The role reversal has been described at greater length by Curran.[9] During the first three stages, the teacher has performed the role of understanding and accepting the students. By this time, they have achieved mastery of the rudiments of the foreign language. The knowledge of the teacher is still necessary if the students hope to achieve a more refined level of ability beyond Stage III. In the redefinition of roles, the students begin to adopt the role of understanding the ideas which the teacher hopes to communicate. The teacher is again accepted into the community and is freed by the participants to perform his/her tasks as teacher. One of these is the correction of grammatical errors which can now be performed without interrupting the flow of the group conversation. The students advance into Stage V, Adulthood, with the ability to take over tasks under the teacher's direction, which previously only the teacher could perform alone. The results are autonomous functioning, achievement of independence, and the students begin to separate themselves from the group as the course ends. If the teacher employs the interview at each CLL stage, then the group life or flow of events will of itself contribute to significant individual development. The effects remain with the person even in his/her independent functioning outside the foreign language learning context.

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[7] A P Beck. *Op. cit.*, p. 437.

[8] C A Curran. *Op. cit.*, 1972, pp. 130–35.

The interview in CLL

The purpose of this part is to describe how different kinds of interviews can be used with CLL. The interview exercises were used during two periods of ninety minutes each week for a two-semester school year. I hope to show how a series of structured interview situations can serve to overcome the difficulties with CLL as described earlier. Each interview is a separate exercise which can be used independently. With a proper awareness of group life, the combination of exercises can be put together by any teacher to provide for the personal development of the individual while English speaking ability is being acquired. The exercises are also applicable to foreign languages other than English at intermediate and advanced levels. The exercises are *The Johari Window, An introduction to creative communication, An interview with you, An interview with the teacher,* and *A personal interview*. Not included in this series is another short reading called *The distinction between content and process*. This exercise can be introduced at any time along the series. A proper timing of this reading can serve to clarify the interpersonal aspects and the task (foreign language acquisition) aspects of the learning situation. Since all the exercises are interviews, each one will be described at each CLL Stage.

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[9] C A Curran. *Op. cit.*, 1978, pp. 82-3.

The interview at Stage I

Stage I is the Embryonic or Birth Stage. Japanese students at this stage are hardly capable of producing any kind of English sentence. They have been trained to memorise lists of vocabulary and to translate from English into Japanese and vice versa. They have no experience in using English as a vehicle of interpersonal communication. Since Japanese do not normally communicate in English among themselves, the first task of the teacher is to establish the life of the group through communication among the students themselves. Japanese culture provides an interpersonal mechanism which can be of great assistance in establishing group life. The group contract can be initiated through self-introduction in small groups. Each person presents his or her self-history, general interests, and specific purpose for joining the group or community. The individual becomes identified as a member of the community through self-introduction.

After self-introduction, the permissiveness connected with small group activities can be avoided by reconvening the whole group. The 'Johari Window' is introduced by way of reflection on the small group self-introduction. The Johari Window serves to introduce the student to his 'English-speaking self'.[10] 'Johari' is an abbreviation of Joseph Luft[11] and Harry Ingham who first described a 'windowlike' model for communication based on self-understanding. There are four sections in the window: the Arena, the Blind Spot, the Façade, and the Mystery. The section open to the self and the other, the public area, is called the Arena. The second section, closed to the self but open to the other, is called the Blind Spot. The third part, open to the self but closed to the other, is called the Façade. The fourth part is called the Mystery because it is closed to the self and to the other. Each person possesses all four areas which influence mutual communication. The walls between each section of the window are permeable, and change with each communication situation. Information moves across the boundaries from the Mystery to the Façade where a person can choose whether it will come into the Arena through sharing it with another. Information can also pass from the Mystery into the Blind Spot. When others reveal this information, the individual may react with shock and pain. Cultural shock may be treated in this connection. If the Mystery of the self is faced with courage, then communication relationships can be established with others. After the explanation, students can be asked to construct a Johari Window in relation to the small group. Covert issues in the class, which affect the progress of learning, can then be brought out into the open. The life of the group is firmly established on growth in self-understanding through communicating with others. The class itself becomes an Arena for the open discussion and solution of all the problems which may arise in the course of the semester or school year.

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[10] C A Curran. *Op. cit.*, 1972, p. 130.

[11] J Luft. *Group processes: an introduction to group dynamics.* Palo Alto, California: The National Press, 1963, pp. 10–15.

The Interview at Stage II

Stage II is the Childhood Stage. In this stage, the individual begins to express meanings and initiate exchanges with others. Two exercises together called *An introduction to creative communication* serve to focus the direction and identity of the group on the basic skills required for foreign language communication. These exercises also define a clear social structure in which students can practise communication with others. The first exercise is called *Rogerian*[12] *listening*[13]. The class is divided into triads. One person presents a problem, topic, or theme. The second person must repeat both the content of the message and the feeling behind the words. Only after an 'okay' that the message has been correctly understood, may the second person give a reaction to or an opinion about the message. The third person is the time-keeper and observer. The interaction is strictly timed to last for ten minutes. Then the roles are changed until each person has had a chance to perform in all three roles.

Reflection on the exercise revealed some interesting points. First, the pace of the communication was slowed down considerably. Consequently, the individuals had time to consider the message before attempting a reply. The result was an improvement in the grammatical quality of the reaction. Students of intermediate ability had time to make grammatical adjustments in their English. Second, the exercise caused a great deal of physical fatigue. Students came to realisation that listening is an active faculty which consumes much energy. At the same time, students of basic ability improved their performance as a result of increased listening concentration. Third, the experience of observing the interaction of two persons helped the observer to understand that the difficulty of mastering a foreign language is a struggle toward mutual understanding. In the highly charged affective atmosphere, grammatical forms and meanings communicated in an exact way were less easily forgotten. Advanced students began to correct each other's grammar in a highly unobtrusive manner. When the observer was an advanced learner, knowledge of the foreign language was also communicated to a less advanced participant. Individual differences in ability were bridged during the performance of Rogerian listening.

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[12] 'Rogerian listening' is named after Carl Rogers, the originator of Client-Centered Counseling. C A Curran was a student of Carl Rogers at Ohio State University.

[13] S Simon, L Howe and H Kirschenbaum. *Values clarification: a handbook of practical strategies for teachers and students.* New York: Hart, 1972.

Fourth, Rogerian listening was not a completely satisfying experience because listening is only a single skill. The slow pace of the communication was unnatural and even frustrating. Other skills employed in communication are making statements, asking questions, and observing. The second exercise is called *Asking, answering, and observing.* One person (A) presents a problem or topic of conversation. The next person (B) assists the first to develop the topic. The message is repeated briefly and then B is allowed to ask supportive questions in order to help A develop the theme. Supportive questions assist another by leads into events which seem relevant. They are introduced by 'who', 'what', 'where', 'why', and 'how'. Questions which can be answered with 'yes' or 'no' do not help the individual, but merely serve to satisfy the curiosity of the questioner. Supportive questions, together with a significant understanding of another, provide the person being asked with a chance to develop a message. The observer keeps the time and takes notes on significant phases of the interaction. After ten minutes, the roles are changed so that each participant receives a chance to perform in all three roles: asking, answering, and observing.

In order to avoid boredom, the reflection period was structured around a checklist. The performance of person B (the questioner) was evaluated by A (the person answering) and vice-versa. The observer (C) evaluated the interaction between both A and B. The checklist for A contained the following questions about B's conduct:

Could you speak freely?

Were the questions easy to understand?

Could you really reveal your thoughts?

Checklist B about A's conduct contained the following questions:

Were you anxious during the session?

Did A really open up to your questions?

Did you understand A's answers or attempt to clarify them?

Checklist C, about the conduct of both A and B, was made up of the following questions:

Were both A and B relaxed in the relationship?

Were the questions and answers mutually supportive?

Did mutual trust exist?

What about the gestures, tone of voice and mannerisms of both A and B?

As a result of these two exercises the understanding of self and the other, the point of the Johari Window, was greatly deepened. At the same time, the direction and identity of the group were firmly focused on the acquisition of the foreign language.

The interview at Stage III

At Stage III, the Separate Existence Stage, the learner begins to function in an independent way in the foreign language. The strong urge toward individual performance can be greatly enhanced by a pair group exercise called *An interview with you.* This interview was suggested by Moskowitz.[14] The exercise is a programmed conversation. A series of open-ended statements is printed on separate pages of a small booklet. Rogerian listening was also reintroduced during the conversations. The participants were led through the program to explore mutual goals and values in learning. The individuals were allowed a certain amount of freedom in deciding their own progress through the program. They were given the choice of performing the exercise inside or outside the classroom. Permissiveness was avoided by asking the students to note down the percentage of English they intended to use before the exercise began.

By way of reflection, students were asked to compare the percentage of English they actually used with the percentage promised before the exercise. The non-judgemental way in which the teacher allowed the students to evaluate their own progress resulted in a strong wish to repeat the exercise with a different partner. When this occurred, I agreed on condition that the students would prepare a set of questions or open-ended statements to be asked of the teacher. This condition set the stage for the re-entry of the teacher into the community. Action in small groups, as was stated previously, gives the students the basic ability to function in the foreign language, but contact with the teacher is also necessary if the students hope to make further progress to more advanced levels of ability.

The interview at Stage IV

Stage IV is the Reversal Stage. As we have seen in the case of therapy and encounter groups, the roles of the participants and leaders are redefined in order for advanced learning to occur. The transition from adolescence to adulthood sees a redefinition of the role of the individual. Perhaps our foreign language methodologists have overlooked this pertinent fact of life. At Stage IV, the teacher adopts the role of interviewee or client; the whole class becomes the interviewer or counsellor. Preparation for the exercise is done in front of the students. The questions from the previous exercise are collected and put in order according to life history. The students are allowed to ask about the childhood, adolescence, and university life of the teacher. Repetitive questions are discarded and the students are allowed to compose new ones where gaps exist. I gathered a series of fifty-two questions for an exercise called *An interview with the teacher*. Employing all the skills which the students had learned in creative communication, each student was allowed to ask two questions of the teacher. In order to enhance the experience, I brought pictures of my early life and student days for the students to examine.

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[14] G Moskowitz. *Caring and sharing in the foreign language class.* Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1978, pp 54–5.

The interview at Stage V

Stage V is the Adult Stage. After a forty-five minute experience with the teacher as interviewee, the roles were reversed again as the students were assigned the task, in groups of five, conducting interviews among themselves. By this time, they were able to function in the foreign language in an independent way. The exercise, patterned after Hopper and Whitehead,[15] was called *A personal interview*. The purpose of the interview was to help the interviewee establish a better self-understanding and to make progress in speaking English. The exercise was divided into three parts: preparation, conducting, and evaluating the interview. The group of five students prepared a single set of questions covering the personal history of an individual. The preparation for the interview with the teacher, the previous exercise, became the model for composing the questions for this interview. The same set of questions was used as a guide when each student took the role of interviewer. One student was interviewed, one acted as time-keeper, and the other two were observers. At the end of each interview, the roles were changed and the interview was repeated. On the day appointed for conducting the interviews, the students arrived with their childhood photographs. The conduct of the teacher was imitated in a completely spontaneous way. The students adopted their roles seriously and found the interview an occasion to review their past and future plans. English became a medium for communication with others as a result.

Results

The purpose of this section is to summarise some results of using the interview with CLL. The one result was whole-person learning. The individual was involved in mental, affective, and psychosomatic make-up at each CLL Stage. At Stage I, the Johari Window produced a sense of something valuable which extended beyond the scope of foreign language learning into the life of the individual. At Stage II, progress in the foreign language was apprehended as something vertical which penetrated deeply into the consciousness of the individual. The lessons learned through the Johari Window were deepened by the experience of creative communication. This is learning of a different kind from horizontal progress through a textbook. The connection between the CLL class and life was grasped in a more immediate way by the students. At Stage III, the students were given freedom to pursue a different kind of learning experience in their interviews than that of memorising sentences and grammatical patterns in a superficial way. During the role reversal at Stage IV, the result of the interview with the teacher was the realisation by the students that they were dealing with a fellow human being. Consequently, when the roles were reversed again at Stage V, the teacher became a more powerful model for the group during their interview with each other. Since they were about to face job interviews in real life outside the school, the distinction between content and process, first described by Luft,[16] was introduced as a short reading. This reading was very helpful in clarifying the two tasks which became confused during Stage V: first, the acquisition of foreign language (content) and, second, the students' personal growth as human beings (process). When this distinction was clarified inside the class, the students were able to apply it to their employment examinations. As a result, their performance during their job interviews improved considerably. Discussion of topics such as family life, friends, movies, marriage, and other current events also contributed to their function and growth as human persons. These were some of the results of using the interview in the group life of CLL.

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[15] J Hopper and J Whitehead. *Communication concepts and skills*. New York: Harper & Row, 1979, pp. 223-52.

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[16] J Luft. *Op. cit.*, p. 16. The distinction between 'content' and 'relationship' has more recently been offered by J Hopper and J Whitehead. *Op. cit.*, pp. 197–8.

CLL: A WAY FORWARD?

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In common with certain comparatively recent developments in language teaching, community language learning (CLL) is suffering from growing pains. It is still not widely used, either with adults or with children learning English in the UK, or learning under British teachers overseas. There are several possible reasons for this.

Firstly, it is often classed, along with the Silent Way and suggestopaedia, as a 'fringe methodology', a pejorative term invented (by someone in British TEFL?) to cope with the threat the methodologies seem to pose to more orthodox credos. Lumped together these methodologies can be conveniently dismissed as 'ephemeral', 'fads' or 'crazes'; they are, in fact, very different from each other, both in conception and in realisation.

Secondly, CLL has not generally been well described or responsibly demonstrated to UK teachers, an unfortunate fact which seems to have two possible and equally unproductive consequences: at one extreme there are super-cautious teachers who state 'I cannot possibly try community language learning out after such a brief exposure to it; I must read Curran and understand him before I try to put his beliefs into practice'. This view may be self-defeating, as Curran **is** difficult to read, and there **is** still a tendency for English teachers to be put off by the style of American writers on language teaching, so the teacher may ultimately reject CLL without trying it at all. At the other extreme there are the overnight converts who attend a demonstration and can't wait to get into class the next morning to try CLL with their unsuspecting learners. They may do this without going into the background at all, and may misunderstand the roles required both of themselves and of their learners. This may have disastrous consequences both for the perplexed learners and for the teacher's opinion of CLL as a method. If the class objects to the new method, the teacher, lacking training and grounding, may find it difficult or even impossible to justify this approach.

The third problem springs from the mistaken belief that CLL is an 'all-or-nothing' American-type method, that its procedures are rigid and allow no deviations. Teachers in the UK seem to share a healthy suspicion of language-teaching panaceas — they have too often proved disappointing — and CLL is seen as yet another seductive cure-all to be resisted with the same kind of stoical resolve as a quack cure for baldness.

There is one more belief which prevents many teachers in the UK from considering CLL as a method: it was initially developed for use with monolingual groups on relatively low-intensity courses. How, then, as a method which relies on translation, and with the time needed for analysis between sessions, could it have anything to offer students in multilingual groups on high-intensity language courses in the UK?

This paper describes some of the ways in which CLL has proved useful in common UK situations, and also mentions some of the problems which colleagues and I have encountered in using CLL.

My early experiences of CLL were through demonstrations on courses for teachers and teacher trainers. The method seemed attractive but limited. I could not really see how it would develop beyond the beginner stage and it never occurred to me that it could be used with a multilingual group or with a group whose language I did not know. During 1979 I then sat in on a class with a colleague[1] who was using CLL in an adapted form to work on fluency with an intermediate mixed nationality group.

I watched several sessions in succession and have since used a very similar procedure with classes of my own, both multilingual and monolingual (Chinese and Arabic). The chief variation on a more traditional CLL sequence is that learners offer their utterances in (probably) imperfect English (rather than their mother tongue) for their teacher-counsellors to 'translate' into correct and more appropriate English.

The basic steps in the procedure

Group in closed circle.

Conversation recorded; cassette recorder passed around. (Teacher-counsellor, outside circle, consulted by some students, usually requiring vocabulary or correction; other students prefer to speak unaided.)

Recording played over to group; individual students ask for some unfamiliar words to be written up. No further questions at this stage.

Teacher-counsellor asks group to reflect on the conversation and to pass comments on it.

Teacher-counsellor takes away cassette to transcribe conversation.

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[1] Sue Ullstein, then a teacher at Bell College, Saffron Walden, from whom I have borrowed the correction symbols (see footnote 2).

Between lessons, teacher-counsellor transcribes conversation and marks errors, using a simple system of notation.[2] Copies are handwritten and xeroxed.

At the beginning of the next lesson, students receive transcripts back and have five minutes to reflect on them and to prepare their own corrections wherever possible.

Tape played through again and students ask questions whenever correction is needed. During this stage, the teacher-counsellor exercises judgement to decide when to do a little spot remedial teaching, and may also decide to devote a whole follow-up lesson to a particular point.

Copies of tape made available for private study, either at home or in the listening centre.

Cycle begins again with new conversation.

Occasional variations of this procedure

Group records a particularly long conversation and teacher-counsellor, after consultation with group, selects an extract or extracts for transcription and consequent close study.

An individual student or a group of students prepares the transcript, without correction symbols, for annotation by the class in next session.

Teacher-counsellor prepares error cards for each participant; these cards point out, but do not correct, errors, and lend focus and challenge to the replay of the tape.

I have noted the following benefits in using the procedure as outlined:

- Freed from the need to 'orchestrate' and structure a conversation, teacher-counsellors can concentrate on their supportive role as the English 'knower' and on jotting down language notes.
- All students in a group with a fairly wide ability range are enabled to contribute on an equal basis, without too many signs of impatience from the more advanced students.

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[2] The system I now use is as follows:

G = grammar
G(T) = verb tense
W O = word order
V = vocabulary
Ref = anaphoric or cataphoric reference
P = pronunciation

□ over syllable/word to be stressed = wrong word/sentence stress
⌒ over a group of words = required intonation
〰 under a group of words = grammatically right but inappropriate

- Many students who are often reticent in more teacher-centred lessons, or even in more conventional group work, eventually find ways of participating in CLL sessions and thus gain confidence in using English. This has occasionally been true to a staggering extent, with students remaining silent or monosyllabic for hours before exploding into talk for no obvious reason in a later conversation.
- Conversely, some students with dominant tendencies have eventually been controlled by peers, either overtly or by skilful manoeuvring of the conversation.
- The conversation is a sample of authentic text, produced by the learners for their own purposes. Motivation to work on it is correspondingly high.
- The fact that learners are in complete control of the microphone switch seems in some cases to be vitally important. They record only when they are satisfied with their own utterance.
- Initial study of the transcript by teachers provides them with useful diagnostic material on which to base remedial teaching, possibly of a more traditional kind.
- Initial attempts at self-correction by learners help both teacher and learners to be more aware of the difference between slips and errors, again setting priorities for remedial work.
- The text is studied as a piece of connected discourse which all have contributed to, and this immediacy makes it particularly easy to work on discourse features such as anaphoric reference, often difficult to teach formally. It is a valuable way of working on fluency.
- Groups can either chat at a fairly superficial level or can discuss matters which are preoccupying them more deeply. Several times now, I have experienced CLL sessions which have become course evaluations from which I have gained extremely useful feedback, of a nature not always easly obtained by more formal channels. It seems to be particularly important to groups at lower levels to have the opportunity to talk about real concerns, without textbook constraints.
- For those teachers who have a fairly formal background themselves, but who want to make their classes more learner-centred, CLL offers a predictable and structured framework, which will enable both sides to progress without feeling insecure. CLL offers a counterbalance to more formal aspects of the course.

- Learners in monolingual groups sometimes use the opportunity to share problems and difficulties. The community sense developed in such sessions has proved to be a great source of strength to students struggling to survive in an alien cultural development.
- One change which I regard as beneficial and which is slowly becoming a feature of all of my teaching and teacher-training encounters is that I no longer feel constrained to approve or disapprove of all my learners' utterances. Colleagues bear this experience out. The 'counselling response' involves simple face-value acceptance of a contribution from a learner as being worthwhile in its own right, without need for value judgment. It has taken a lengthy period of involvement with CLL for the importance of the 'counselling response' to begin to sink in. At a simple level, it encourages one to listen more actively; taken further, it helps one to regard each student with more attention as an individual with something valuable to say.

Some drawbacks and caveats:

- Early sessions may be uncomfortable, as teachers and learners alike struggle to adapt to new roles. Learners may be particularly vocal in their demand for teacher-counsellors to provide a theme for conversation. I am convinced that they ought not to, as to do so would be to reduce at once the degree of learner investment in the conversation, thus providing some less interested members of a group with a ready made excuse for opting out of the discussion.
- Discussions often continue at an irritatingly trivial level for a long time. The group will usually tackle this problem in its own good time. Teacher intervention should not be needed.
- Early sessions may often be characterised by long silences, with learners seeking reassurance through eye contact with the teacher-counsellor. I try to keep my eyes down hoping that learners will ultimately find their reassurance in contact with each other.
- On a high intensity course, a teacher may wish to use CLL to concentrate on one aspect of the programme (*eg* oral fluency), while teaching other components of the course in more traditional ways. I have sometimes found this easy enough to carry through, but not always. The transition from teacher to teacher-counsellor with the same group requires a genuine effort of will.

— Not all groups respond well to CLL. It is important to give any prospective CLL group a rationale for the approach, and to point out the benefits to them. It is particularly important at this stage to 'buy time' by getting the group to agree to an extended trial, over four or five sessions. If teachers fail to do this, they may be confronted with learners who see their behaviour as an abdication of responsibility and feel (if they are paying for their course) that they are not getting value for money.

— Reactions to the tape recorder are often negative. Learners complain about having to pass it round and switch it on and off, claiming that it destroys the spontaneity of a conversation. They also complain that it inhibits them anyway, and is like an intrusive big brother. My favourite machine for CLL lessons is a Philips N-2215 which has a built-in microphone and a pause button, can be operated by battery or mains and gives surprisingly good reproduction. It can be passed easily from student to student.

— I have occasionally known groups with 'warring' factions or individuals, and on one occasion (the only time it has happened) I had to intervene and suspend a session when two students with a hearty contempt for each other used the freedom of the CLL situation to vent their aggression on each other. In a situation like this, there is no breach of faith involved in an intervention. Students have a right to expect a background of security for their learning.

— Embarking on a course of CLL sessions with a group at post-beginner level is an uncertain enterprise, for it is impossible to predict which stage of learning each individual will be in. A colleague[3] recently reported a whole group which flung itself into the very first session with great gusto, ignoring the teacher-counsellor completely. This is fine as long as the teacher-counsellor is mentally prepared for the possibility. It is more common to find students at different stages, and it is often difficult to keep at bay feelings of warmth and favour towards those learners who are still fairly dependent and consult the teacher-counsellor often. Teachers need to be needed!

This account of work with CLL is not intended to be anything more than an interim experience report. It is not an attempt to proselytise. My conclusion at this stage is that the modified versions of CLL which I have used have, on the whole, helped the learners I have used it with, both immediately with error correction and, longer term, with the development of self-monitoring techniques, confidence building and independent use of language. Used judiciously (*ie* up to three times per week) on a full time course, it seems to offer welcome extra breadth and depth.

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[3] Jill Hadfield, South Devon Technical College, October 1981.

I have also learned a lot about myself and my efficiency as a teacher; home truths sometimes fly thick and fast in CLL classes! I find myself particularly in agreement with Stevick as I lean on CLL to try to make my whole approach more learner-centred:

> If we, in our zeal to be humanistic, become too 'learner-centred' with regard to 'control', we undermine the learner's most basic need which is for security. We may find that we have imposed our own half-baked anarchy on the class . . . In a task-oriented group like a language class, the student's place is at the centre of a space which the teacher has structured, with room left for him to grow into.[4]

It is the belief that CLL might well offer just such a structure that encourages me to align myself with the lunatic fringe for a little while longer!

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[4] E W Stevick. *Teaching languages: a way and ways*. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1980.

LEARNER-CENTRED REMEDIAL WORK: A HUMANISTIC APPROACH[1]

Henry Daniels, University of Lyon II, and Denny Packard, Ecole des Mines, Nancy

Teaching upper-intermediate and advanced students can be particularly rewarding, but when provided with an opportunity to furnish feedback, students frequently voice two recurrent complaints: the feeling that they are not progressing in English, and the feeling that there is not enough correction by the teacher.

There are good arguments to counter both objections. In the first instance, students are often **unaware** of their progress. At more advanced levels, language **learning** (that which results from structured exposure to language teaching) is likely to become increasingly subordinated to language **acquisition** (which is a result of natural and largely random exposure to language).[2] Language improvement at this stage involves a deeper-level learning than earlier when the focus was often centred more on the surface structure of the language. Increasing fluency, improving pronunciation and intonation *etc*, often escape the learners' notice. In the second case, frequent teacher correction during student discussions can disrupt the communicative process, destroy student confidence, and create a barrier between students and the teacher. The strongest argument against frequent teacher correction, however, is its ineffectiveness. At the end of a conversation activity, students are usually unable to recall what errors or what corrections have been made. We are thinking in particular of those small mistakes that learners continually make (despite their 'knowing' better) which are likely to be repeated the next day, if not within the next ten minutes.

Nevertheless, we ought to acknowledge the genuineness of these student complaints. Denying their validity may satisfy most teachers, but ultimately few learners. An upper-intermediate or advanced learner will frequently, in fact, continue to make the same mistakes and fail to absorb new items. We as teachers have felt the frustration of presenting new language (idioms, functional expressions, *etc*), giving learners plenty of realistic practice, only to realise that in ensuing unstructured interaction the learners often inadvertently slip back into their former habits. So it does appear true after all that many learners are **not** learning as effectively as teachers — **and the students themselves** — feel they should be.

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[1] The ideas presented in this paper grew out of a seminar 'Community language learning and beyond', presented by Patrick Early, assisted by Krys Markowski, at the British Council in Paris, 5–6 October 1981. We would also like to acknowledge the contribution of Brigitte von Jonquieres of ESIEE, Paris, in helping us to clarify our ideas.

[2] See the discussion on language acquisition and language learning in D A Wilkins: *Second-language learning and teaching*. London: Edward Arnold, 1974.

Remedial work needs to be done, but how? Through constant repetition, errors can become deeply ingrained and traditional correction techniques are, on the whole, ineffective in weeding them out. Insights gained from Rogers,[3] Stevick[4] and Curran[5] suggest that the most effective remedial work should come from the learners themselves, have immediate relevance or meaning to them, and take place in a non-threatening atmosphere of acceptance — in short, be learner-centred.

Sound or video recordings (so basic in community language learning) can be useful for student-centred remedial work, but its effectiveness is severely diminished by two factors. First, even when very attentive, learners can overlook some important errors, thus obliging the teacher to be more directive. A second and even more limiting factor is that student interest, while initially very high, can flag after ten minutes or so.

Using hot cards

A seemingly more effective technique for remedial work and language improvement that we have experimented with uses 'hot cards' as a basic tool.[6] This can easily be adapted to a conventional CLL session or to any classroom activity involving conversation among learners in groups or subgroups of four to eight. The procedure involves three stages:

Conversation stage. The teacher hovers from group to group, carrying a stack of small cards or slips of paper (8 x 5 cm is convenient) and noting down sentences, words and expressions exactly as they are spoken by students, one per hot card. Each card is then discreetly handed to its author. Because these hot cards will later be used for language improvement work, more than just errors are written down.

Correct utterances are also noted on the card, for example, words which students frequently mispronounce, idioms, functional expressions *etc*, which may not be in the active vocabulary of everyone in the class. There should be no indication whether a hot card represents a correct or an incorrect utterance.

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[3] Carl R Rogers. *On becoming a person*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961, and *Freedom to learn: a view of what education might become*. Columbus, Ohio: Merrill, 1969.

[4] E W Stevick. *Memory, meaning and methods: some psychological perspectives on language learning*. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1976.

[5] C A Curran. *Counseling-learning in second languages*. Apple River, Ill.: Apple River Press, 1976.

[6] The origin of hot cards is unknown to us, but we learned of them from Mario Rinvolucri and John Morgan of Pilgrims Language Courses, Canterbury.

Here are a few examples of hot cards distributed recently in a class of French-speaking students. They have been numbered only for the convenience of our discussion:

1. postpone
2. you are concerned of this matter
3. stainless steel
4. we cut everyone
5. to be married with such a husband
6. she tried to explain him the situation
7. insert
8. breadwinner
9. they were responsible of something
10. she didn't know how to act with what she was confronted to
11. she felt disgusted by her lover
12. I feel the madman is the most responsible person
13. he wanted to get rid of her
14. at face value
15. she hasn't got enough money to pay for her passage on the ferry
16. the director wanted me to come and see him
17. I'm not so sure I agree with you

Here 'postpone', 'breadwinner', 'insert', 'to get rid of' and 'at face value' were correctly used by individual learners but were noted, as these expressions might not be commonly employed by everyone in the class. Hot card 16 represented a correct construction, but one which often takes some time to be assimilated because of mother-tongue interference. 17 is likewise the appropriate use of a tricky functional expression — tricky because no equivalent exists in French. In example 3 incorrect stress would possibly have made this term unintelligible to a native speaker. In the context of the conversation, it was apparent that the speaker of utterance 4 had meant 'cut off'. 12 represents an interesting case because here the discussion centred on the responsibility for a person's death. The speaker was not aware of the distinction between 'the most responsible person' and 'the person most responsible'. While 15 was perfectly correct, 'to afford' was an alternative expression likely to be used by a native speaker. The group would have to assess each 'hot card' for its accuracy and appropriateness.

Reflection stage. At the end of the conversation, students are asked to put all their cards together and to sort them into two piles, a 'good' pile and a 'bad' pile. Here the students will be discussing and reflecting upon the accuracy and appropriateness of their own utterances. Providing each group with a monolingual dictionary and some reference books, such as *Practical English usage*,[7] is particularly valuable. Likewise the teacher functions as an informant, answering questions, but giving only minimal explanations. In circulating from group to group, the teacher might choose to focus students' attention on an overlooked point or to note down problem areas which need to be worked on later.

Presentation stage. Each group is asked to select two or three cards from its 'bad' pile and two or three cards from its 'good' pile that illustrate points with which they have had difficulty and/or which would most benefit the entire class. The teacher either explains these points to the whole class or has each group in turn present them, assisting as needed. The learners may wish to keep their hot cards for future reference. In any case, the teacher and learners should work out together what follow-up work, if any, they feel would be most appropriate.

They might try something along these lines:

> They can wait for a natural recirculation process to take place.
>
> They can elaborate corpus-based practice material.
>
> They can choose a prompt to introduce subsequent conversation stages in the hope of directing learners at least for a few minutes over a particular thematic, functional or grammatical terrain.

We feel that this kind of learner-centred remedial work has several distinct advantages:

> It provides both students and teachers with valuable insights into the teaching and learning processess, specifically how well previously taught items have been internalised.
>
> Both students and teachers become aware of areas requiring remedial work. (Obviously hot-card-based remedial work can be used as often as desired.)
>
> It preserves the freedom of the learners to produce their own data.
>
> It makes substantial use of peer teaching.
>
> It encourages learners to take responsibility for their own learning.

It follows that the teacher-training programme should lay great emphasis on such things as the teachers' ability to give clear, concise and well-illustrated explanations of language phenomena, on their understanding of the principles of syllabus specification and design, on their knowledge of the learners' native language(s) and on their skills as error analysts.

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[7] Michael Swan. *Practical English usage*. OUP, 1980.

The favourable reaction from students to this technique suggests that the problems frequently cited by students (and teachers) in upper-level classes can to some degree be overcome. A significant advantage is that using hot cards appears to be at the same time highly efficient and quite consistent with the principles of student-centred teaching and/or community language learning.

DESIGNER'S NEEDS VERSUS LEARNER'S NEEDS: CONVERSATION IN THE L_2 CLASSROOM[1]

Patrick Early, The British Council, London

Recent work in the field of needs analysis has tended to overstate the advantages of deriving an inventory of syllabus content from a prior analysis of the communicative 'needs' of the learner.[2] It may be that such an analysis, if based on adequate empirical fieldwork and not merely on the analyst's intuition, can yield a more principled selection from the universe of language than would be the case if such an analysis were not carried out. It can thus legitimately claim to guarantee the **relevance** of course content by ensuring that it is an adequate reflection of future communicative requirements of learners. At best, however, I suggest that such an analysis is likely to be of limited value. There are various reasons for this of which I shall mention only a few.

While it may be possible by making use of a needs analysis instrument such as the Munby model to specify in functional or notional terms — or even in terms of language 'skills' — what items should be covered if a group of learners is to carry out certain identifiable communicative tasks, it is not thereby possible to state the order or sequence in which such items should be learned, nor can one specify by reference to target behaviour, what techniques or strategies can best be deployed to ensure that learning effectively takes place. We are left with a profile of learner needs, that is, a relevant content specification which can be shown to relate to the desired target behaviour, but the Munby model stops short of providing us with a principled means of setting up a teaching syllabus and methodology.

The significance of the absence of concern with pedagogical syllabus or methodology can best be appreciated by reference to constraints imposed by the time factor in course design. The sponsors of ESP courses naturally need to know how long a group of learners will take to approximate the desired target behaviour. But an answer to this question cannot be attempted without reference to the characteristics of learners and their preferred learning strategies. An adequate methodology should attempt to take such factors into account both as they exist *a priori* in the learner, and as expressed in actual encounters.[3] Needs analysis, as currently practised, can tell us little or nothing of value in this area. Superficially the provision, by means of a needs analysis instrument, of a minimum adequate grammar suggests economy of learning effort. In practice, such economy cannot be realised in terms of syllabus specification alone. It can only be realised in terms of economy of individual learning effort, and this implies taking into account the variability of individual learning behaviour.[4]

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[1] This article is based on a paper given at the joint British Council/Goethe-Institut AUPELF Colloquium 'The acquisition of language skills as a function of well-defined needs', Paris, 1-4 October, 1981 (proceedings forthcoming).

[2] J Munby. *Communicative syllabus design*. CUP, 1978.

Needs analysis, as defined by its leading practitioners, is carried out in the target situation, that is, in a situation by definition remote from the classroom setting. It is primarily concerned with producing an adequate description of those 'real-life' communicative situations in which, at some future time, learners will have to make use of the target language. It is this description, as we have indicated, which provides the basis for a profile of learner needs from which a syllabus can be derived. However, the effect of this overriding preoccupation with target discourse and behaviours is to divert attention from the immediate situation in which both learners and teachers find themselves. What John Munby terms 'psycho-pedagogical factors' are relegated to a postscript in *Communicative syllabus design*; this is, of course, a deliberate exclusion, yet it is disturbing to find [illegible] mention of such factors and no consideration of methodology in a work which takes on the broad field of communicative syllabus design.

A further consequence of this deflection of attention away from the classroom setting has been a tendency to ignore the central importance of classroom talk, its range of discourse types, its permitted and potential roles, and relationships. Too frequently the creative contribution of the learner has been marginalised as a result of an overriding preoccupation with target discourse and behaviours. One thing learners might contribute to the learning process, is their ability, which derives from their language competence in their L_1, to make meaning, to talk. Second language teaching has yet to harness this ability fully, but it is surely not unreasonable for learners to expect to gain practice in spontaneous spoken interaction in the L_2 in the classroom setting before being exposed to the demands of real-life conversation in the world that lies outside the classroom, a point I shall return to below.

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[3] Patrick F[illegible]y. *Beyond Munby and into the gap*. In The British Council. Dunford House papers in ELT course design. British Council, 1979.

[4] Tony Crocker. *'Scenes of endless science': ESP and education*. In J McDonough and T French, eds. The ESP teacher: role, development and prospects. (ELT documents, 112) The British Council, 1981.

Many of these criticisms have been made before by other writers.[5] The difficulty of agreeing upon an adequate definition of the term 'needs' has been stressed by Bowers,[6] who, in particular, suggests that 'needs' should not be taken as identical with 'wants'; in other words, learner preferences should play a part in any approach to needs analysis. One might add that the notion of a hierarchy of needs developed by Abraham Maslow and taken up by Earl Stevick[7] contributes a further valuable dimension to our understanding of the concept, most notably in its acknowledgement of the importance, for the learner, of achieving an adequate basis of affective security from which to engage with the cognitively demanding task of acquiring foreign language skills. An appropriate methodology will take very seriously the emotional needs of learners. The best methodology in the world is wasted when the student is on the defensive, when he is not 'open to the input'.[8]

The main problem in developing an appropriate methodology is that of ensuring that learners perceive their communicative needs, however defined, as personally relevant to themselves rather than merely imposed on them by an expert syllabus designer, course designer, or even teacher. Holec has stated the basis of an effective approach to curriculum in the following terms:

> It would mean setting up curricula which would be defined in broad enough terms to allow each learner to feed into those loose frameworks his own objectives as he progressively specifies his initial goals. This can be established provided two conditions are fulfilled: (a) that the institution, or the teacher, no longer seek to keep entire responsibility for, and complete control over, the curricula; and (b) that the learners be trained to assume responsibility for carrying out the procedures involved in curricula development.[9]

Holec argues that the logical step from such a view of curriculum is a 'shift to self-directed learning or autonomy', a conclusion with which I would not disagree.

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[5] See the forthcoming PhD dissertation by D Willis (University of Birmingham), H Holec: *Learner-centred language teaching: needs analysis revisited*. Studies in second language acquisition, **3** (1), pp. 26-33, and C Brumfit: *From defining to designing: communicative specifications versus communicative methodology in foreign language teaching*. Studies in second language acquisition, **3** (1), pp. 1-10.

[6] R Bowers. *The individual learner in the general class*. In Altman and James, *eds*. Foreign language learning: meeting individual needs. Oxford : Pergamon Institute of English, 1980.

[7] Earl W Stevick. *Memory, meaning and method: some psychological perspectives on language learning*. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1976.

[8] S Krashen. *Second language acquisition and second language learning*. Oxford : Pergamon Institute of English, 1981.

[9] H Holec. *Op cit*., pp. 31-2.

I would now like to offer a specific methodological suggestion within the general theoretical framework of 'autonomous' approaches: that is a methodological strategy for progressively enfranchising the learner in the classroom setting. The approach owes something to Curran's community language learning, and something also to recent theoretical work in the field of the pragmatics of speech acts. It is an approach to second language learning viewed as conversation or talk.

Corder has reminded us of the neglected people in the language teaching-learning situation:

> language acquisition, whether of the mother tongue or the second language, is a cooperative enterprise . . . and takes place uniquely through a process of social verbal interaction or **talk.**[10]

Corder hypothesises that effective learning can take place through the teacher's contriving of classroom talk. If the aim is communication in an L_2, then it is appropriate that learners should learn to communicate by communicating. They should be helped to participate in communicative acts: '. . . a perfect example of learning by doing'.[11] Pursuing this line of argument, it is worth asking whether it is possible to approximate conversational interaction in the classroom setting. One account of conversation is the following:

> Minimum of two participants
>
> Necessity of taking turns
>
> Remarks of participants deal with roughly same subject, not random
>
> Remarks must contain some information, not be empty
>
> Interaction must not primarily be for explicitly statable purpose: it's not for business
>
> Participants behave as equals, with neither acting as authority
>
> Remarks must have some measure of spontaneity and non-predictability
>
> Few imperatives appear
>
> Regular processes apply[12]

Analytical studies of classroom discourse show that this kind of interaction seldom occurs in the classroom situation. Interaction usually follows well-established pattern with both teacher and students following traditional pedagogical modes. Such talk as occurs is frequently either language-like behaviour (drills *etc*), or pretend-talk (role-plays), or talk about language or language-learning. Despite interesting recent work which develops the possibility of getting learners to bridge an information gap by communicating relevant messages,[13] there is still little exploratory talk, little mutual exploration of meanings or possible meanings by learners. The second language classroom is still dominated by what Dakin termed 'structure speak'.[14] Brumfit suggests that one alternative to 'structure speak' is work designed to give learners practice in fluent and spontaneous speech:

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[10] Pit Corder. *Language teaching and learning: a social encounter.* In On TESOL, 1977, pp. 1–13.

[11] Pit Corder. *Op cit.*

[12] Donaldson. *One kind of speech act: how do we know when we are conversing?* Semiotica, **28** (3/4), 1979.

> The primacy of speech is no stranger to the foreign language methodologist, but an emphasis on fluency is. Traditional syllabuses have always had a basis in the accurate construction of the target language, rather as if it were a building being built from a blueprint . . . What would be the implications if we used **fluency** as the basis for a language curriculum, rather than accuracy?[15]
>
> The natural learner in a total immersion situation operates . . . on an oral basis of fluent and inaccurate language [rather than] on a carefree building up analytically of accurate items according to a descriptive model. An emphasis on accuracy in classroom language leads to inflexibility, lack of adaptability and ability to improvise; it is a 'deficit curriculum' . . . because it does not start from what a student does.[16]

What is meant by fluency in this context requires considerable development, yet the notion as initially proposed by Brumfit places the learner in a central position in the learning process. A fluency base will help students to learn because there is no mismatch between what the teacher offers and what the student can do. Teaching should respond to, rather than interfere with, learning. A major implication of such a hypothesis concerns the type and quality of the talk which non-native speakers are capable of producing. Thus Pit Corder argues that 'foreigner-talk' should be acceptable in classrooms,[17] a statement which, if translated into everyday teaching practice, would have revolutionary implications. Teachers should intervene in the teaching/learning process primarily when students seek their help and then to shape or expand their utterances rather than to correct them, in any judgemental sense. Given this kind of encouragement, learners can and will talk freely to one another in a second language.

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[13] K Johnson. *Communicative approaches and communicative processes*. In C Brumfit and K Johnson, *eds*. The communicative approach to language teaching. OUP, 1979.

[14] J Dakin. *The language laboratory and language learning*. Longman, 1972.

[15] C Brumfit. *Communicative language teaching: an educational perspective*. In C Brumfit and K Johnson, *eds*. The communicative approach to language teaching. OUP, 1979.

[16] *Ibid*., p. 188.

[17] Pit Corder. *Learner language and teacher talk*. Audio-visual language journal, **16** (1), pp. 5–13.

I have recently experimented with materials designed to bring about classroom conversations between postgraduate learners from extremely varied cultural and linguistic backgrounds. A sample of this type of material used is given in the Appendix. The essence of the approach exemplified in *Names*, a two-hour sample unit of material, is to bring learners to share personal and cultural experience through their differing reactions to the highly emotive topic of 'names'. As a preliminary, the class is divided into groups of four or five who eventually work on their own, without the direct intervention of the teacher, making use of the worksheets provided.

The purpose of this material is to develop conversational skills at intermediate/advanced level. It makes the assumption that it is both possible and desirable for foreign students to develop those skills in the classroom. The conversations are not contained in the text since this would be a contradiction in terms. Instead the students are led to 'make conversation'. Neither does the teacher induce the students to talk. The approach is basically non-directive and designed to provoke autonomous conversational exchange between students. The conversations which result last for periods of up to one hour (or even longer) without teacher intervention. Although the material contains reading passages, these are there to set up and reinforce a given semantic field, and to stimulate its exploration. Reading for gist is required, but the aim is not reading comprehension as traditionally conceived. Hence comprehension questions do not figure in the apparatus. The material requires skilful teaching, but above all it requires an understanding by teachers that their main classroom resource in the creation of meaning is the learner. Thus it requires an imaginative leap, from the mind of the teacher — and its conventional furnishings — to the mind of the learner, and the richness it contains. The basic methodology employed derives from a study of the power and potential of community learning. It differs from the classic model of community language learning in acknowledging learners' need to find their conversational feet in shared themes[18] and topics. These are selected not on grounds of their reflection of current affairs — as in standard 'discussion' materials — but on grounds of their underlying power to move students to react and to express themselves at both superficial and deeper levels. The approach owes something to Gertrude Moskowitz, whose 'caring and sharing' techniques are often effective in getting learners to loosen up. It differs from Moskowitz in one basic principle: the projective principle. It assumes that learners prefer to express their feelings obliquely rather than engage in direct confession or self-avowal. The visuals and texts are chosen because they are triggers to self-expression, and allow themes and topics to elicit reaction. This removes the danger of shyness and embarrassment impeding self-expression. The onus of rehearsing specific functions and notions of language is thus shifted from teachers to learners, who explore the meanings of the language as they progressively discover what it is they and others have to say.

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[18] I have discussed elsewhere the crucial matter of selecting the right themes and topics to get people talking. The basic principle is to select material that moves people to say something. But this is another, longer story.

Teaching and study format

At present the material consists of units designed for between 1½ and 2 hours work. There are five basic rubrics which correspond to phases in the lesson.

Phase 1. Mini-text material to motivate, gain attention and get learners to enter the semantic field dictated by the topic, *eg* visuals, short text in colloquial language, jokes.

Phase 2. Essential terms: these are key terms vital if learners are to handle the conversational topic. There is some necessary overlap with content of texts but these terms do not set out to gloss reading texts.

Phase 3. Material to read to deepen understanding of issues, to illustrate these in a striking way, *eg* newspaper text, longer piece of prose containing essential narrative substance for discussion.

Phase 4. Conversational starters: the real core of the unit. These are 'structuring' questions designed to initiate, direct and sustain interaction between students. They 'deepen' the topic, as they proceed in the prescribed order.

(Phases 1–3 would occupy roughly similar teacher learning time to phases 4 and 5.)

Phase 5. Oral material, *eg* apposite sayings, proverbs, quotations, jokes. These are intended for memorisation, or retelling, or to spark further discussion.

Methodology

Phase 1. Teachers present topic usually through mini-text.

Phase 2. Teachers run through vocabulary and essential items.

Phase 3. Students read text silently. Teachers check for comprehension.

Phase 4. Teachers divide classes into groups of three to five persons. Appoint a secretary who 'asks' the questions round the group. Students must take their part in discussion and may contribute in ways not foreseen by 'structuring' questions (the 'conversation starters').

Teachers circulate and join groups occasionally. Once they have joined a group they must participate, *eg* themselves answer questions. After conversation has continued until topic is exhausted, teachers revert to a frontal role and ask secretary for a summary of the work of each group. Secretary sums up.

Phase 5. Lessons end with a saying, proverb, or joke. Students are invited to memorise or practise this in speaking, and these may be referred to in subsequent sessions.

Proceedings may be tape-recorded or video-taped for playback, and analysis of effective conversation strategies. On the whole, though, correction is kept to a minimum. The material is designed to increase confident speaking and fluency. It does this by allowing learners to develop their ideas in the foreign language in the mutually sustaining atmosphere of the small group.

APPENDIX

Names

1 When Poland collapsed thousands of Polish soldiers, sailors and airmen made their way to England and joined the British forces. At one RAF base where a Free Pole was serving, the Station Warrant Officer was calling the roll. After running through the Joneses, the Smiths, and the Williamses, calling out the initials as well, he paused and then called out 'Zazawodski'. No answer. Again, he called the name. Still no reply. Somewhat annoyed the Warrant Officer once more shouted 'Zazawodski'. At last an airman in the rear rank spoke out: 'what initials, sir?'

(M Kowalchuk, Canada)

From *Humour in uniform*. Readers digest, September 1974, p. 75.

2 *Useful vocabulary*

Name	—	can be either **first** name or **family** name.
Christian name	—	first name.
Nickname	—	'pet' name, *ie* not a person's real name, but a funny name often used affectionately.
Maternal surname	—	mother's family name.
Paternal surname	—	father's family name.
Initials	—	letters that stand for names, *eg* J M Smith = John Michael Smith.

Note: English people do not usually have a **second** family name, for example, the mother's family name. A second Christian name is usually known as a middle name.

3 *Conversation starters*

1 What are specially common names in your country?
   a First names.
   b Family names.
2 Is your own family name common?
3 Does your family name tell people anything about you, *eg* where you come from?
4 Some English names refer to trades or professions, *eg* 'Butcher'. Does your name 'mean' anything?
5 What do you feel about your first name?

6 What are the names of your children? Why did you choose those names?

7 Do you, or does anyone you know, have a nickname?

8 What do your friends call you for short?

9 Would you ever be willing to change your name? In what circumstances?

4 *Using people's names*

1 How do you find out an English person's name if you have not been introduced?

2 How do you address an English person in a public place if you don't know that person's name?

3 What do you say if you have forgotten a person's name?

4 How do you know when it is acceptable to address an English person by his or her first name?

HOW REAL IS A COMPUTER SIMULATION?[1]

John Higgins, The British Council, London

If you look up a number in a telephone book, you may not be very conscious of the processes you are using: select volume, open it, leaf forward, leaf back, read down a column, read up a column, recognise name, read along, BINGO. This is a binary search pattern which draws on stored knowledge of alphabetical order. Compare this with what happens when you find a number by calling directory enquiries. You dial 192 and, by that action, enter a highly structured and predictable process.

Which town?
– Bristol
Subscriber's name?
– Davies
Initials?
– J D
Street address?
– Rosewood Avenue
The number you want is 811 747
– Thank you
You're welcome

The process may vary if your information is deficient but the operator will try to stay within the set procedure that (s)he has been trained in.

The overt difference between looking the number up in the book and using the enquiry service is that one becomes very aware of a turn-taking process, an exchange, or, to use the grandest available term, a dialogue. It is a rather well-formed dialogue. Each turn is complete and separated from the next, without curtailment or overlap. The operator initiates and you respond. Your own question was asked implicitly when you dialled 192 and there is no need to re-state it. The operator and you pursue your common goal by question and answer until it is achieved, at which point you go through a formal signing off routine. This piece of well-formed dialogue has a strong resemblance to the four- and eight-line dialogues printed in language textbooks. It also resembles a good deal of teacher-pupil interchange in classrooms. That, too, is well-formed without very much overlap, and is mono-directional.

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[1] Revised version of a paper given at the IATEFL Conference, Goldsmiths' College, London, 20 December 1981.

The real-life activity which we call conversation differs considerably from these models. Turns do not alternate regularly and predictably. Elements of the exchange are interrupted or are left unfinished, or take place simultaneously so that there is overlap. All of this is governed by a complex set of rules or discourse strategies, which are still not fully analysed. But I suggest that one important factor is that the participants in conversation maintain perpetual monitoring of two states; we are holding two questions in our heads all the time: 'Does the other person want me to respond?' and 'Should I intervene?' It is the mix of intervention and response which gives conversation its character and its complexity, and it is the suppression of intervention which leads to the rigidity of both the telephone enquiry and the common form of teacher-led classroom discourse.

Very interestingly, there are two keywords in the BASIC programming language which provide a metaphor of the processes of response and intervention. The first is INPUT. If a computer program contains the word INPUT it means that the computer will wait at that point for the user to do something. The user types in words or symbols, but must signal the end of what is typed by pressing NEWLINE or CARRIAGE RETURN. Until this is done, the program will not continue. So the dialogue process is well-formed. Up to INPUT it is the computer's turn. From INPUT to CARRIAGE RETURN is the user's turn. From CARRIAGE RETURN to the next INPUT is the computer's turn. And so on.

The other keyword that you may find in a program is GET or, on some machines, INKEY$. This works very differently. When the computer encounters GET in a program it will use as a value whatever key is being pressed at that moment. But the program does not stop. It is as if the machine was glancing over its shoulder to see if you have any instructions for it. You use the GET keyword, for instance, in games which use moving displays. Your spaceship is apparently navigating through asteroids. If you do nothing it will move straight ahead, but if you press the key with the left arrow it will move to the left. The computer has GOT your message, but only because you intervened.

The conventional, and now fairly familiar, pattern of computer-assisted learning programs is that of the well-formed dialogue relying heavily on the INPUT command. It often begins with a chatty signing-on routine.

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PLEASE TELL ME YOUR NAME
John
HALLO, JOHN. TODAY WE CAN DO EXERCISES ON
THE PLURALS, THE DATIVE OR THE PAST TENSE.
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WHICH DO YOU WANT?
Past
YOU WANT THE PAST TENSE. IS THAT RIGHT? Y/N
Y
JUST WAIT A MINUTE, PLEASE
HERE IS A SENTENCE. PLEASE MAKE IT PAST.
ICH WOHNE IN LONDON
Ich wohne in London
NO, THAT'S NOT RIGHT, I'M AFRAID. THE PAST
TENSE OF A REGULAR VERB IS MADE BY ADDING -T-
TO THE PLAIN STEM AND THEN ADDING THE ENDING
FOR PERSON. PLEASE TRY AGAIN
Ich wohnt in London
NO, YOU FORGOT THE FIRST PERSON ENDING.
THE CORRECT ANSWER IS
ICH WOHNTE IN LONDON
NOW TRY THIS ONE.
ICH LIEBE DICH
And so on.

The learning theory behind this kind of presentation is closely derived from the programmed learning theories of B F Skinner and Norman Crowder in the sixties: the subject matter divided into small easily assimilated steps, overt checking after each step, immediate confirmation of results, dish out a Smartie if it's right. The people who write such materials will tell you that students like them (some of them do), that they are effective, and that they are necessary in order to give individual attention to points of accuracy and detail which a class teacher is bound to miss. It is worth pointing out here that what is superficially a conversation between machine and human is really a displaced interaction between the human teacher who has composed these messages and the learner who now receives them. The programmer has imagined what might be said in a face-to-face tutorial with a student who makes such mistakes, and has arranged for these words to be displayed on the screen. Any of the observed shortcomings of the example (heavy use of metalanguage, code-switching, lack of context, patronising tone) are due to the programmer's lack of imagination or teaching skill, not to any inherent limitations of the machine. It is also true that this style of presentation may match the student's expectation of what it is like to be taught by an individual tutor. (Notice I said **be taught by** rather than **learn from**). Students expect the teacher to know things, to tell them things and to ask questions to which they already know the answers.

A general word for question-and-answer sequences in which the questioner already knows the answers is a quiz. In American usage the word describes anything up to an end-of-year examination, but in Britain usage the connotations of quiz are of something fairly casual, possibly recreational and competitive. I sometimes seem to hear, as I look at computer-assisted language learning programs, a sombre voice saying 'Your two minutes on the past continuous starting NOW'. Quizzing (or 'testing') is an important and frequent component of learning. Teachers do it to find out if a point has been understood. Learners welcome appropriate forms of quizzing as a chance to test themselves, to find out how generalisable their new knowledge is. If they have learned __I get up at eight o'clock__, they may want to find out if they are also allowed to say __*I am getting up at eight o'clock'__, __*I get at eight o'clock up__, or __*I get up at eight and a half o'clock__. If teachers provide their classes with chances to try out these forms, they must also provide immediate feedback in case the errors crystallise. Most teachers settle for a more limited format, testing a very small set of utterances, and quizzing for recall rather than extension of known language. The traffic is one-way. Computer programs written with this quiz structure also have to limit themselves, since they cannot provide appropriate error messages to cover a divergent and unpredictable set of possible responses. The computer quiz is at least as good as the class quiz or the pencil-and-paper quiz, but it is inferior to a good individual tutorial with a teacher who has a full command of the target language and can cope with highly divergent language.

Computer quizzes require very little programming skill. One can now buy ready-made software packages which handle all the programming, leaving the teacher to compose only the questions, right answers and error messages for predicted wrong answers. Quizzes can be embellished in a variety of ways. Running scores can be calculated and displayed. The selection of the next question can be made sensitive to the learner's performance so far, or the order of the questions can be randomised so that students do not get any order cues if they repeat a quiz. A machine with a large memory can preserve data on the student's performance for the teacher to consult later. (This 'Big Brother' function frightens some learners, and part of the appeal of the small free-standing microcomputer is that, unlike the university mainframe, it will not normally preserve the student's learning history.) Graphics and animation can be used to add interest to the display. But, whatever is done, the machine is in the role of teacher. It controls what comes next and whether a response is accepted or corrected. The only thing learners control is pace, since until they press CARRIAGE RETURN the machine is immobilised.

Sceptics who doubt the value of computer-assisted learning often base their judgement on programs with quiz structure and have little idea that there are other possibilities. In the individual mode, one learner at one machine, the most powerful applications of the computer are in text presentation and processing. Cloze reading exercises are now familiar elements of a reading skills course. The computer has great flexibility with these. Whereas a book contains a fixed selection of texts, with a fixed order, and within each text a pre-selected set of deleted words, a computer cloze program can store a great range of texts to be called up in any order, and can apply nth word deletion to each of them at the student's direction. If learners want a relatively easy exercise they can opt for blanking out every tenth word, or if they want something more challenging they can ask for every fifth word to go, or any other value they want. If a particular word baffles them they can ask for a clue, *eg* first and last letters. Such programs are very easy to write; once written one can compile a bank of suitable texts at leisure. An extremely interesting variant of the cloze process has been devised by Tim Johns in a program called *Masker*. Students see a screen which contains only blank characters representing a complete passage, and a question which can be answered from the passage. From a notional 'capital' the students are now allowed to 'buy' bits of the text. They might be offered, at different prices, the first sentence, the last sentence, any other sentence, the first word of each sentence, the five longest words in the passage, all the words of three letters or less, and so on. The higher-priced options correspond to those with highest information content, *eg* first and last sentences, longer words, and it is on these that the skilled reader learns to concentrate when reading fluently. Games of the *Hangman* type played with phrases and sentences, or de-anagramming or decoding games, help to develop expectancy skills in learners, so that they make use of language redundancy.

A computer can store information either in the form of inventories or rules, and allow the user to search. In this case the traffic in questions and answers is reversed, and the machine becomes the slave rather than the master. (In fact it is always a slave, and the illusion of mastery associated with quizzes is something put there by the programmer.) Another Tim Johns idea which emphasises role reversal is exemplified in a short program called *S-ending*. In this the computer has been given a set of rules for making English words plural (or adding a third person -s to a verb). It does not have an inventory of irregular forms (goose/geese, man/men, *etc*), but will handle most regular forms and nonsense words. The learners' task is to try and catch it out, and thereby formalise their own knowledge of spelling rules. The user types in a word and the screen displays the word with its plural. Within a few minutes the learner should have discovered that the computer will add -s to **cat** or **dog**, -es to **church**, **loss** or **fish**, knows that **Bach** and **loch** have -s only, but goes wrong if asked to make a plural of **wife** or **half**. A group of learners could now discuss how to express a rule which would fill this gap. What would their rule do with **chief**? And so on. For the computer need not be just an individual tutor. The data on its screen can be something to talk about as well as something to talk to. To this extent it is just like any visual aid, though possessing more flexibility than a printed aid.

So far all the activities described have been based on the INPUT command and have consisted of well-formed dialogue. There is a quite separate group of activities, generally classified as games, which use the GET keyword, and which introduce the element of skill and timing. To take a very simple example, I have written a program for total beginners which uses the sentence pattern: '*Name* is in/from *place*'. The top of the screen displays a matrix of information:

NAME	FROM	IN
Mike	Liverpool	London
Anna	Bristol	London

This provides four 'true' sentences:

Mike is from Liverpool
Anna is from Bristol
Mike is in London
Anna is in London

But there are eight other 'false' sentences which can be generated by random combination:

Mike is in Bristol
Anna is from London
Mike is in Liverpool, *etc*

A randomly generated sentence ribbons its way across the bottom of the screen and learners have to press a key to 'trap' it if it is true. They win points if they do this, between twenty and thirty according to the speed of their reactions, but lose ten points if they 'trap' a false sentence. Ten true sentences constitute one run of the game. The screen displays their current score alongside a 'day's best score' which they are trying to beat, in the manner of arcade games. Even a game as simple as this can become addictive. My teenage daughters played it for nearly three hours when I asked them to try it out, in the process reading well over a thousand of these simple sentences. Imagine a true-false test in a printed book with a thousand items.[2]

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[2] This game is based on the language and situations of Robert O'Neill: *Kernel one*. Longman, 1978–9, p. 3.

There are many potential applications of the game technique. Christopher Jones, for instance, has written an attractive *Language snap* in which a pair of words is displayed and one of the pair randomly changed. (The speed of change can be selected by the user at the beginning of the game.) When both members of the pair are associated (*eg* translation equivalence, associative pairs, word and opposite) the users press a key, winning points if they are right and losing them if they choose an unrelated pair or overlook a correct pair. In all such activities there is an interesting reversal of function compared with dialogue activity. When INPUT is being used learners control pace but little else. When GET is used the machine controls pace (once the game has begun) but the learners control the order of events by their interventions.

This leaves one major category of activities, simulations. These can be entirely in dialogue form, using the INPUT command, or can involve a blend of response and intervention, using INPUT and GET. They can be undertaken by individual learners, but are more rewarding if tackled by a small group consultatively. Although the external structure may be that of dialogue, they differ significantly from quizzes in that there is an initial task assigned and probably several possible solutions or routes to a solution. Computer owners are familiar with elaborate simulations under the general title of 'adventures'. A typical adventure has as its task the recovery of a hoard of gold from an underground cavern, guarded by a dragon, infested by malevolent goblins, and ruled by a powerful wizard. The player must move through a network of corridors by typing instructions which change the display. Instructions may be coded (N for North, *etc*) or may be in natural language of which the computer will understand a limited set. Does this all sound childish? If so, there must be a good deal of the child in all of us, as many sensible adults get quite engrossed in such games or their outer space equivalents (*Startrek*).

My own simulation, *Murder*, has been designed for lower intermediate learners practising past tenses. Learners are 'summoned' on the screen to a house in which a murder has been committed. They can look at a plan of the house, consult a list of suspects, 'question' a suspect by typing in the questions **Where were you?** and **Who was with you?** and once they have detected a lie, 'accuse' a suspect. If they are right the suspect will 'confess'. The program uses the randomising capacity of the machine, so each run of the game is different. In the ten minutes or so that learners spend solving a fairly simple problem in logic, they will have done quite a lot of reading of sentences containing past tenses, and will have typed in ten or twelve of the questions, virtually a concealed repetition drill. In the same way a simulation I am working on now, called *Clothing store*, has learners as shop assistants, trying to earn commission on the sales they make, but to avoid losing it by selling to customers who have exceeded their credit limit. In the process they will get painless practice in a small set of request, offer and refusal formulae. Other tasks I intend to tackle include survival on a desert island which one explores for food, water and shelter, or negotiations with a vet over the risks and benefits of inoculating one's herd of cattle, threatened by an infectious disease. At a simpler level one can simulate giving directions to a motorist by using a displayed map. The whole range of available subject matter is vast.

To sum up, the computer can offer the language learner a variety of supplementary activities which are highly interactive and potentially motivating. There are at least five main types, the quiz or overt teaching program, the text-processing program, the search, the game and the simulation. In the last four the computer is no teacher but is a provider and organiser of relevant language experience. It would be foolish to ignore the drawbacks. Communication via a keyboard is laborious; screens carry much less information than a printed page, and voice interaction at a level to satisfy the demands of the language teacher is still in the remote future. But cost is no longer an inhibiting factor when machines cost as little as £120. Admittedly the cheapest machines do not provide realism. The chunky graphics are no substitute for looking at the real world. But the tasks one can carry out on them are quite real enough to engross learners. We all know that there are plenty of kids who find that navigating their interstellar battleships in the amusement arcades is more real to them than the business of answering teacher's questions.

SUGGESTOPEDY AND THE ADULT LANGUAGE LEARNER

Peter O'Connell, formerly with the Institute of Suggestopedy, Sofia

Suggestopedy is a philosophy of learning and teaching that arouses strong enthusiasm in the devotee and much suspicion among the orthodox. Even those who are sympathetic to its principles feel uncomfortable at some of its claims and their lack of sound verification, yet if these claims can be proven even in part mankind will benefit very greatly.

Suggestopedy originated in Bulgaria and has spread to a number of countries, not only in the Soviet bloc but also in Western Europe and particularly to Canada and the USA. In Bulgaria many thousands of primary school children are learning all subjects by this method with joy and ease, but outside the land of its origin suggestopedy is mainly associated with the teaching of foreign languages to adults. It is a method that lies outside the field of orthodox language teaching principles. This is not surprising: its creator is a true outsider, a doctor of medicine, a psychiatrist and formerly a prominent parapsychologist. Dr Georgi Lozanov finds himself a teacher of teachers, if not a teacher, because through his experience in the medical profession he became aware of and deeply impressed by two phenomena in human life. The first of these is the enormous potential of the human brain and the very small part of it that is normally used. The other is the power of suggestion. For the past twenty years Lozanov has been studying these mysterious facts of human biology and social behaviour and claims to have discovered principles and developed strategies for utilising some of the 'reserve powers', the term he uses for that part of the brain that is inaccessible to most learners. He believes this is 96% of the brain's potential.

Lozanov lives in an Eastern European country and this must be remembered when trying to understand his ideas and the forces that influenced them and controlled their application — and still do. As a psychiatrist, he used hypnotism with success in his therapeutic work. He observed that he was sometimes able to effect cures, or amelioration of symptoms, by the use of suggestion alone; in other words suggestion without trance could be as effective as suggestion applied to subjects under trance. The most powerful piece of evidence to support his doctrine came not from psychotherapy but from surgery: Lozanov acted as anaesthetist to a man undergoing major abdominal surgery and used only suggestion. The patient felt no pain, and the operation was a complete success. Lozanov has a videotape to document this remarkable feat.

All this seems a long way from teaching languages to adults. In fact the divorcing of suggestion from hypnotism enabled Lozanov to apply suggestion to many human activities outside the psychiatrist's consulting room. He created the new science of suggestology, to make a systematic study of the role of suggestion in all branches of human life — medicine, art, commerce, advertising and, most important of all, education. Suggestology applied to learning and teaching Lozanov calls suggestopedy.

Lozanov's other creative obsession was the importance of a phenomenon widely remarked on but otherwise ignored: man's unused mental powers. The human brain is very large and powerful. It is generally agreed that most of this capacity is unused, but few seem disturbed at such waste. The rare person who gains access to some of this potential is classified as genius or prodigy and so placed beyond emulation. Lozanov startles by asserting that all people can gain access to some of the reserve powers if they can be liberated even a little from the 'suggestive norm' of their society. The suggestive norm is the set of assumptions about themselves and society that people grow into from birth. It is a kind of psychological carapace that confines them within the conventional wisdom in all things and particularly within those unconscious assumptions about human capacities and limitations.

Lozanov boldly claims that it is possible to find ways through this carapace, this anti-suggestive barrier. The teacher can 'desuggest' learners and suggest them at a higher level. To use Lozanov's own gloss, the teacher 'liberates and encourages' the student. Lozanov maintains that this is the first and highest duty of a teacher. Turning on the tap is more productive than anxiously husbanding a thin trickle.

How is the teacher to achieve this transformation? Lozanov makes clear that the desuggestion must be subtle, gentle, indirect. 'Any logic or brutal insistence', to use his own words, would be useless, counterproductive. In his book *Outlines of suggestology and suggestopedy*[1] he lists three principles of suggestopedy, the first of which he calls 'joy and psycho-relaxation'. Only if students are mentally relaxed and enjoying the instruction will they be able to use some of their hidden potential. Most teachers would agree that anxiety and boredom are the chief enemies of learning. Lozanov is unusual in building his pedagogy on this proposition. Joy and relaxation are the prerequisites of all effective, fast learning. In language learning this means that students must feel comfortable, unthreatened, secure, and at the same time interested, amused and involved in meaningful activities using the new language. Only in this relaxed and happy state will learners respond to the teacher's desuggestion/suggestion, encouraging them to perform beyond their normal expectations.

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[1] Published by Gordon and Breach, London, 1978.

Lozanov calls enjoyment and relaxation the first principle of suggestopedy. The other two are gaining access to the 'reserve powers' and the harmonious collaboration of the conscious and the unconscious.

What skills and attitudes are expected of the suggestopedic teacher? Lozanov lists a number of features in the learning environment that he labels 'means of suggestion'. Paramount amongst these is 'authority'. It is the authority of the teacher and of the course that persuades students to change their 'suggestive norm', their belief in their own powers, their hopes and expectations. The term authority as used by Lozanov must not be confused with authoritarianism: his concept of authority is entirely benign. While teachers must have authority they are always supportive and positive. 'You never hear the teacher say no' is a comment often made by students in a suggestopedic course.

This authoritative supportiveness must be felt and expressed at all levels of the personality. Lozanov draws attention to the powerful influence in human interaction of intonation, voice quality, posture and gesture, all the more powerful for being for the most part noted and reacted to unconsciously by the observer or hearer. Orators, demagogues, popular preachers use these paralinguistic features with great effect. Good teachers are proficient in their use, presumably by intuition as little attention is given to them in orthodox teacher training. Lozanov in his work as a psychiatrist realised their necessary part of the therapist's authority and transferred this awareness to the teacher's functions. He sees this as a 'suggestive means' and has his own term for it, 'double planeness'. Conviction, sincerity, understanding of the rationale of the course must be conveyed in both 'planes' or the authority of the teacher will be weakened and the suggestive force of the teaching reduced. When one becomes aware of these elements in classroom communication one begins to see and hear weaknesses in one's own and others' teaching: the meaningless gesture, the self-doubting tone, the discouraging mien. These powerful interactive forces are given very much less attention in orthodox teaching training if they are given any at all.

'Infantilisation', as used by Lozanov, means the achievement by adults of an open, trusting and spontaneous attitude to learning 'as in the pleasant atmosphere of a sensibly organised children's team'. Infantilisation is directly related to authority. Through authority and double planeness teachers relax their students and encourage in them creativity and the urge to experiment, aptitudes and attitudes conspicuously present in happy childhood. Suggestopedic courses are remarkably successful in stimulating the most unlikely people to daring forays into the new language. Middle-aged Canadian civil servants in the second week of learning French would tell stories, act out sketches, recite jokes with cheerful abandon. Anyone knowing the attitude of anglophone Canadians to the French language will recognise and admire the power of 'infantilisation' in this situation.

The fourth means of suggestion is concert pseudopassiveness. This strikes the orthodox ear as a gear-grinding piece of jargon but on analysis it reveals much of Lozanov's thinking. He is renowned for his love of music and use of it in his courses, but the word 'concert' in the term may refer to music or it may refer to a state of mind, that which one adopts on sitting down to listen to a concert of classical music — calm, relaxed, expectant, without responsibility. Lozanov believes that in this state of mind the learner hears and remembers more than if straining the will to listen and understand and memorise. The student looks passive but this passivity is 'pseudo': in fact much is happening in the student's mind, conscious and unconscious. This phenomenon will be referred to again later.

After this brief introduction to the theory of suggestopedy we can look at its application to the teaching of foreign languages to adults. The model for all the courses run on suggestopedic lines comes from the Institute of Suggestology in Sofia. It is important to understand the objectives of these courses. They are designed to teach only the oral language to people who can be free for three hours a day, five days a week, for four or five weeks. Many participants — mostly beginners and false beginners — are about to go abroad and need 'survival language'.

Fifteen hours a week of language instruction in addition to working part- or even full-time in one's job is a formidable assignment, but in suggestopedic courses students are rarely absent or late. In the first hour they lose their initial anxiety and quickly establish an *esprit de corps* and a delight in the work that encourage regular and punctual attendance and indeed bring a sense of disappointment when the course is over. Lozanov's first principle of joy and relaxation has been invoked. How does the magic work?

Lozanov lays stress on the mental nature of the relaxation enjoyed by his students. In other words his teachers do not engage in yoga or in any form of physical or breathing exercise, but there is one important physical component in his courses: his teaching environment is more like a sitting room or a study than a conventional classroom. Students and teacher sit in a circle in upholstered, high-backed armchairs and enjoy the comfort of carpets, curtains, pictures and good lighting. Lozanov judges these amenities an aspect of 'double planeness' — silent suggestion that the course is relaxed and comfortable. There is no doubt that the effect of these physical amenities is great: not only is there comfort and a changed relationship amongst participants but there is also formed a kind of arena theatre that encourages movement and lively interaction. Students, no longer desk-bound, learn to speak on their feet and to move as they speak, to use gestures, to feel free in the new language. Upholstered armchairs are expensive; much the same comfort and altered atmosphere can be created quite cheaply by the use of deck-chairs with arms. The Ecole Française de Suggestopédie in Paris uses these chairs very successfully.

These are the only physical aids to relaxation. What are the 'psycho-relaxation' techniques that Lozanov adopts? In the first place he sees translation as a means of reducing anxiety and of launching beginners quickly into situations where lively exchanges in the foreign language are possible. Long before the contemporary emphasis on communicative competence, and the modern course designer's interest in functions and notions, this remarkable outsider had understood that adults could not enjoy learning a foreign language unless they were engaged in meaningful exchanges. Beginners on the first day are given new identities — name, profession, address — and a dialogue of 800 words in which the twelve or fourteen people in the class become delegates to the 'Man and Nature Conference in the Park Hotel, London'. The transformation from nervous, silent students into confident and happy delegates is effected in thirty minutes by a teacher turned 'Conference Manager' — a magical piece of suggestion that is as moving as it is successful.

The 800-word dialogue is another piece of 'desuggestion and suggestion'. In the audiolingual world of language didactics the intensive work on a small number of simple utterances suggested to students that the work was difficult, that they could be expected to master only small samples in the early stage of the course. Lozanov's 'desuggestion' begins when his teachers, with supreme confidence and nonchalance (and the use when necessary of quick *sotto voce* translations), introduce their students to a long dialogue, printed parallel to a native-language translation. It is in no way a translation course. The main focus is always on the target language: the translation is there for the security of the learner.

One of the major differences of Lozanov's pedagogy from orthodoxy lies in his presentation of new material. It lasts for over an hour, and during most of this time students are silent, and for much of the time they are following the printed texts with their parallel translations. They can ask questions in their own language during the first run-through of the dialogue (the 'decyphering') but they know they will not be expected to answer any in the target language. They can relax and listen, freed from the burden of rehearsing possible responses to the teacher's possible challenges. The teacher reads the dialogues three times. The second reading is also with the text and students mark their books and make notes as they wish. The third reading takes place against a background of baroque music — Corelli, Vivaldi, Handel. Students are invited to put aside their books and to lean back in their chairs and listen with closed eyes. Some feel happier following the text again and are allowed to do so: suggestopedy relies on suggestion and positive feelings not on discipline or coercion. If students ask if they should listen to the words or the music they are told to listen to the music. This reveals another Lozanov principle: the value of peripheral learning. He has done some experimental work in his research institute that supports his claim that stimuli received peripherally go into the long-term memory. Listening to the 'concert' (relayed on hi-fi equipment) the student appears passive, even asleep, but is in fact, Lozanov claims, utilising reserve powers and creating the conditions for hypermnesia, very efficient memorisation.

The new dialogue is always introduced at the end of the day. Lozanov wants his students to sleep on the dialogue before it is practised. This is part of his strategy for encouraging the conscious and the unconscious minds to co-operate fruitfully. Students report an awareness of some kind of beneficial processing of the new language during the night.

The course is strictly time-structured. The introduction of a new dialogue is allocated to the last hour, or hour and a quarter, of the day-long attendance. The three hours of the following day and the first half of the next day are spent on what are called in Sofia the 'elaborations' of the dialogue. Then on the third day the last sixty to seventy-five minutes launches the class into another long dialogue, another series of experiences and adventures as delegates to the 'Man and Nature Conference'.

The four and a half to five hours of the first and second elaborations are spent practising the language of the dialogue. At this stage also the fantasy conference plays an important part in creating good conditions for learning. All students have a personal investment in dialogues recounting experiences of the delegates who are their alter egos. It is both surprising and delightful to witness the childlike enthusiasm of adults of all ages in acting out their roles and in devising sketches based on them. The language practice work is always in the form of games, dramatic episodes, jokes, songs. The dialogues are read, rehearsed, acted out. Sketches using important structures are prepared in groups and acted in front of the others. The native language is used for the preparation but only the target language is used when performing. The atmosphere at this stage is more like a theatre workshop than a classroom. Songs are frequent: they help to create and sustain the atmosphere of pleasure and confidence. Jokes are also popular, not mainly to illustrate a structure or an idiom or an element of phonology (though these are not unimportant) but to provide the delight that all learners experience when they see a joke in a foreign language. The extended role playing encourages humour and the creation of in-jokes. Team competition brings an edge to events without threatening individuals. Language practice of all kinds is encouraged so long as it never becomes a drill. Much of the linguistic gain of a drill without its negative force is won in the suggestopedic classroom by the use of a ball. The throwing and catching of the ball become the main focus of attention — the language is 'peripheral', and the students are helped to keep 'infantilised'.

Often it is not the teacher's praise but the group's laugh that proves successful communication. That the expression is sometimes faulty worries suggestopedic teachers less than their more orthodox colleagues. They believe it is better to be on one's feet and boldly using the new language with pleasure than seeking perfect repetitions of meaningless segments in a language laboratory or at a desk. They trust to the power of peer- and self-correction in an atmosphere of confidence and experimentation. They do correct some errors but quickly and as an aside, suggesting (that word again) that communication, not formal study, is the group's function.

The question has to be asked and answered: how effective is this highly unconventional pedagogy in terms of verifiable language acquisition? It has to be admitted that evidence based on carefully administered tests is scarce. The figures that come out of Sofia are impressionistic. The analytical, controlled, impersonal approach to testing that satisfies the applied linguists is unlikely to measure fairly the performance of students who still have a euphoric attitude to the language. Some careful tests have been administered in the Suggestopedic School in Paris and the results tend to confirm that many students (not all) learn rapidly and well, but there is no solid evidence for 'super-learning'. What is consistently demonstrated is that students leave a beginners course with a very great attachment to the language and a desire to seize every opportunity to communicate and to improve their performance in it.

Suggestopedy is therefore a proven success in the field of affective learning. This is in itself a great achievement. For success in opening up the reserve powers and inspiring adults to prestigious feats of learning, the evidence has still to come in. The young schoolchildren in Bulgaria who are lucky enough to be taught by suggestopedy, do seem to be learning with ease at an unprecedented speed. Perhaps one day we shall all be able to follow their lead and through 'infantiiisation' achieve similar levels of effortless learning. Meanwhile suggestopedic courses around the world are teaching adults to speak foreign languages with pleasure and delight. As one young woman in Sofia explained tautologically but ecstatically at the end of five weeks in the Institute, 'Oh, that there could be an eternal and never-ending English course!'

THE SILENT WAY: EVALUATING AN EXPERIENCE

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A certain mystique surrounds the Silent Way. While its philosophy is straightforward and accessible, the terms of its practical implementation in the foreign language-learning situation appear to be less easy to define. Attempts to describe how the Silent Way functions tend to put forward tentative interpretations of Gattegno's philosophy.[1] Most teachers who use the Silent Way do so in some modified form which is integrated into a broader, eclectic approach. Those who are interested in coming to terms with the Silent Way are usually recommended to attend a seminar on the subject or at least to observe some Silent Way lessons, rather than try to learn about the approach from books. Just as the philosophy advocates 'throwing the learner upon himself'[2] in preference to giving explicit answers to his questions, so teachers' courses on the Silent Way set out to give participants the opportunity to 'experience' the approach. This paper came about as a result of participation at such a seminar;[3] the impressions gained stem from the necessarily limited viewpoint of the participant-observer, who tries to be a willing learner in demonstration lessons and at the same time an open-minded critic of the approach as a whole.

It is claimed that the Silent Way cannot be discussed in the same terms as most other approaches to teaching languages: 'the method is a revolution and cannot be compared easily with familiar methodologies'.[4] Nevertheless, it should be possible by considering both the philosophy and some examples of classroom practice observed at the seminar to isolate certain key features of the Silent Way and relate them to other approaches. We shall examine in particular the use of the term 'humanistic'[5] to describe the Silent Way and try to assess the relevance of the approach in a language-teaching scene which has grown in sophistication since Gattegno began developing his materials in the early fifties.

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[1] For example Earl Stevick: *Teaching languages: a way and ways*. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1980, and Mary Hines: *Explorations of new trends in language learning: the Silent Way*. In On TESOL, 1979.

[2] Caleb Gattegno. *Teaching foreign languages in schools: the Silent Way*. (2nd ed.) New York: Educational Solutions, 1972.

[3] 'The subordination of teaching to learning in the case of the Silent Way'. (Seminar leader: Dr Caleb Gattegno) Bristol, 6-8 November 1981.

[4] Mary Hines. *Op cit.*

[5] 'Humanistic' will be understood as in the description, given by Rardin in this volume, of a humanistic educator: 'It means that I respect an inner capacity — an integrating principle — in each learner to gain insights and make choices appropriate to his/her own learning process'.

In the seventies English language teaching saw a general shift of emphasis towards the individual learner and individual learning strategies, with teachers trying to minimise their amount of intrusion into the learning process. It would appear that most of the approaches which have been popular in recent years have important features in common. Rivers[6] lists six characteristics which can be observed not only in the Silent Way, but also in suggestopaedia and counselling-learning/community language learning (C-L/CLL):

> They involve the whole person of the student.
>
> They involve second language learning as quite different from learning a first language.
>
> They are inductive in the initial encounter of the student with the language.
>
> They are non-corrective and give students time (and thereby reduce the anxiety and tension of language learning).
>
> They encourage a communicative situation from the very beginning.
>
> They try to create a community feeling of 'all pulling together'.

It is certainly true that the various approaches share common characteristics, at least at the philosophical level. However, their actual implementation in the classroom should be examined to establish what the above 'humanistic' characteristics mean in practice and the extent to which the approaches are fundamentally different. In the case of the Silent Way, any attempt to account for classroom practice is hazardous because of Gattegno's insistence that the Silent Way is an 'approach' to learning and not a 'method'. Any comments on method and technique contained here are based on observations of (and participation in) lessons conducted by Gattegno.

First, however, we should note the claims which are made by the Silent Way. As far as involvement of the whole person is concerned, Silent Way learners develop 'new inner criteria' every time they come to feel that they know something from within themselves, rather than echoing the teacher or memorising rules. Learners must begin to trust themselves, to 'listen to the baby within them'. The silences which occur in the lessons provide students with a chance to process thoroughly in their minds the few things they have been given by the teacher. The absence of any comment by the teacher when students offer a correct response is intended to increase their self-reliance. Since the emphasis of the language input is on carefully selected elements chosen for their 'combinability' with the rest of the acquired language, learners are made aware of the possibilities they have at their disposal to manipulate language and to generate a large number of utterances out of a small core. Students, in their responses, keep the teacher constantly informed about their progress so that the teacher is able to select the next step according to the way the student handled the previous input. As the lesson progresses, students experience a series of trial-and-error approximations of the language. The teacher translates the subject matter into a series of challenges in accordance with the teacher's own knowledge of the language and perception of what the students need at any given moment. These are examples of what Gattegno refers to as the 'subordination of teaching to learning'.[7]

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[6] W Rivers. *An exploration of new trends in L_2 teaching: the Silent Way, suggestopaedia, counseling-learning, community language learning.* In On TESOL, 1979.

The system gives an impression of efficiency: the language is meticulously broken down into easily assimilable units, only one problem is dealt with at a time. Just as babies practise making individual sounds before they pronounce words, so Silent Way learners first practise isolated sounds before progressing to meaningful expressions. The English language has been analysed and a small core extracted and set out on a series of word charts (fidels). As learners become aware of the possibilities of manipulating this core, they develop, according to Gattegno, an understanding of the 'spirit of English'. The student thus learns something more fundamental than basic survival English. Since the approach emphasises the way in which language operates, Gattegno hopes to lead his learners towards a better understanding of the factors which influence the ways in which native speakers of the language conceptualise.

Awareness is as much a watchword of the Silent Way as it is of most other recent approaches. 'The teacher has two functions with respect to his students: he must force awareness, he must provide exercises to ensure facility.'[8] However, in the case of the Silent Way this awareness appears to be limited to the learners' awareness of the foreign language and their awareness of the way they are learning. Making students 'aware' manifests itself differently in other humanistic approaches, by developing, for example, learners' awareness of their own personalities, their bodies, their interlocutors, the way they react to their utterances. The Silent Way's restriction of the range of types of awareness underlines the emphasis it attaches to the mechanics of language and the relatively low priority it appears to give to such areas as the interaction of speakers and the choice of language appropriate to who the speaker is and the occasion on which it is being used.

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[7] Caleb Gattegno. *What we owe children: the subordination of teaching to learning.* New York: Avon Books, 1972.

[8] Caleb Gattegno. *The common sense of teaching foreign languages.* New York: Educational Solutions, 1976.

A further fundamental difference between the Silent Way and other approaches is to be found in the relationship between teacher, learner and subject matter. What the teacher is to teach is not ascertained as a result of analysing the language needs of a particular learner, nor is the methodology chosen as a result of an analysis of the student's previous training, expectations or interests. The subject matter is already fixed. It has been arrived at on the basis of an examination of English and represents, according to Gattegno, key elements of the language, which will introduce the learner to the 'spirit of English'. The selection was not made with any particular student in mind. Clearly, the student who will learn most successfully by the Silent Way is one who agrees to play according to the rules of the game. Students must be prepared to accept that an 'expert' has refined the language into a form which is a good one for them to learn. And when they begin to generate scores of sentences at the instruction of their teacher, using only the words on the charts, they might be forgiven for asking what relevance such artificial sentences have to them as people, since the content of the charts cannot possibly reflect what students actually want to say or hear. It would appear that the content of what students practise is not given high priority in the Silent Way. Are the aims, interests and specific needs of learners not important and complex enough to warrant their being taken into account when lessons and courses are planned?

Of course, most students do expect their teachers to have a knowledge of their subject and some expertise in teaching it. However, the extent to which students wish to participate in the shaping of their own learning differs, as do opinions among teachers about the amount of responsibility learners should be allowed to assume for their own learning. 'Humanistic' teachers at any rate tend to advocate learner independence. Again, a key concept such as 'independence' needs to be examined in terms of what actually happens in the classroom. On the one hand, C-L/CLL allows the learners completed freedom to determine the content of their course, while the Silent Way on the other demonstrates a more restricted interpretation of 'independent'. In no sense are Silent Way learners allowed to be so independent of the teacher as to influence the subject matter of the course, nor do they have independence to initiate classroom interactions since they must obey the teacher's instructions. Independence for them consists in gaining a feeling of control over the language they are leaning. On the relationship between teacher, learner and subject matter Stevick writes (in this volume): ''Humanism' emphasises the centrality of the learner rather than the supremacy of the subject matter or of the teacher'. In the Silent Way, as experienced by this observer, the supremacy of both teacher and subject matter was unmistakable.

Another Silent Way rule which seems to be hard to square with humanism is the insistence on complete concentration on what the teacher says. Few teachers would deny that concentration on the part of students was to be encouraged. However, a framework in which learners are only allowed to answer precisely what they are asked can all too easily lead to a stifling of valuable contributions from learners, in the name of training efficient learning habits. An example from the Bristol seminar will serve as an illustration. The teacher constructed some shapes using his coloured rods and asked the students to describe what they saw. One student immediately associated the shapes with a particular mental image, which he offered to communicate to the rest of the group. The reaction of the teacher came as a surprise. He was not impressed by the way the student had gone beyond a mere physical description of the rods to associate the shapes with something which was real and meaningful for him. The flight into fantasy was considered irrelevant and the student reminded that he had not been asked to make associations. The Silent Way insistence that students should concentrate on only one thing at a time could be regarded as tackling the complex issue of learning on too narrow a front. It is possible that potentially worthwhile learning experiences become suppressed in the tight rules of the game.

Not that there is no place for creativity in the Silent Way. As Gattegno pointed out to the wayward student, there was a time for creative activities. He explained how students of his had written poetry using only the core vocabulary of the word charts. This core vocabulary, which is externally imposed upon the learners, can hardly offer sufficient material for what students want to say by means of poetry.

Since this article relates particularly to one short exposure to the Silent Way, it would be unfair to try to make too many generalisations concerning the implementation. Similarly, references to details of the actual lessons observed might have little general applicability. However, one observation probably has some significance for lesson evaluation in general. At the end of a morning of beginners' Arabic demonstration lessons, the learners were asked for their comments. Almost all agreed that they had had a strong feeling of involvement throughout the lessons and had spoken a lot of Arabic, while a few expressed doubts about what they had actually learned. Strong student participation and a high proportion of student talking time are often regarded as indications of a successful lesson. Yet, a check carried out by the teacher a few hours later revealed that only a few participants had retained much of what they had said during the morning and some had retained almost nothing at all. This revelation surprised many participants, who had assumed that their efforts during the strenous morning session would yield better results. Obviously, the lessons were conducted in artificial circumstances since the participants were playing the role of students while retaining part of their role as observers. In many respects the demonstration lessons differed from the real situation, as is generally the case with demonstrations. Nevertheless, we can conclude that student involvement and the amount of student talk alone cannot be relied upon as indications of how much learning has taken place.

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Arthur McNeill is at present working in English Language Services Department, the British Council, London. He has taught English and trained teachers most recently at the University of Frankfurt am Main, the Foreign Languages Institute, Moscow, the British Council, Hamburg, and at Pilgrims, Canterbury. He also worked for three years as editor/writer of ELT materials with Cornelsen, West Berlin and has written components of the *English G* and *Englisch für Erwachsene* series.

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